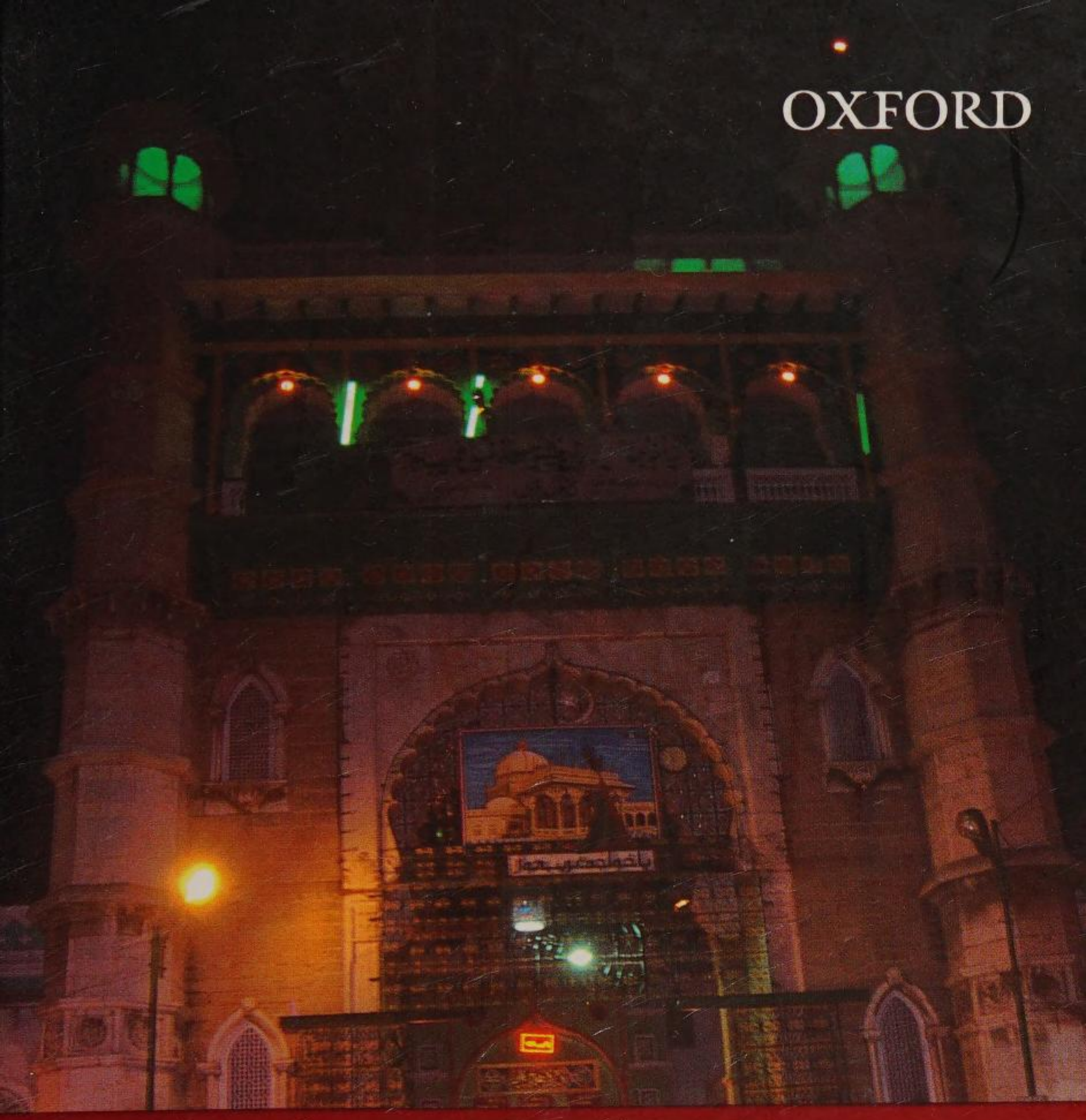

Muslim Shrines
IN INDIA

edited by CHRISTIAN W. TROLL

with an introduction by Marc Gaborieau

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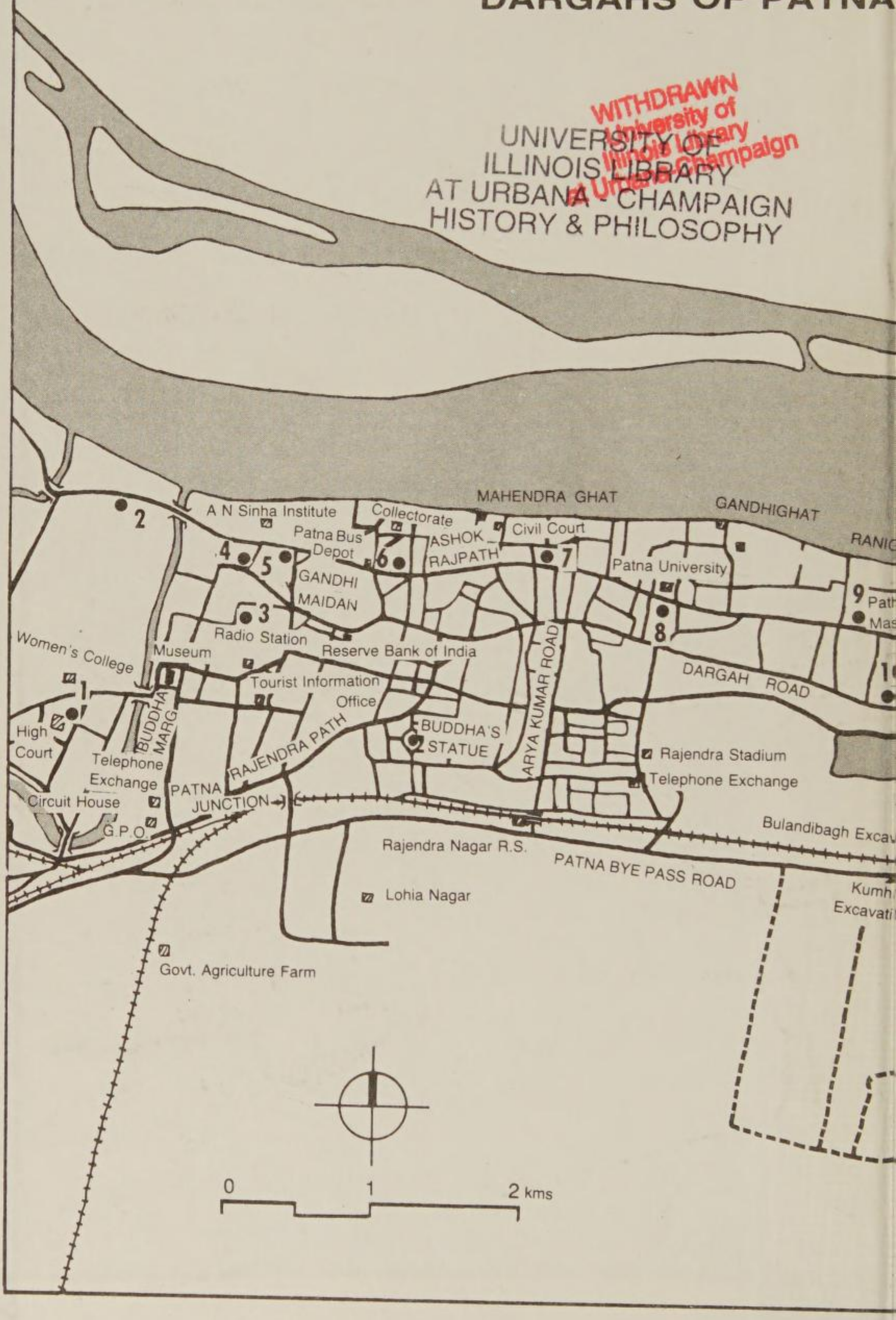

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2 HEAD OF SYED GHULAM SAFDAR
3 SHAH CHHAJJU
4 BAZ BAHADUR SHAH
5 TIPU SULTAN SHAH
6 CHUNNI BIBI
7 MIRZA MURAD SHAH
8 PIR BAHORE
9 BHANWAR SHAH
10 SHAH ARZAN
11 SHAH MUNᶜIM PAK
12 SHAH ᶜISHQ
13 SHAH HASAN ALI HARANI
14 SHAH MAᶜRUF
15 PIR DAMARIYA

MUSLIM SHRINES IN INDIA
Their Character, History and Significance

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Introduction to the New Edition

MARC GABORIEAU

It is an honour for me to write an introduction for the second edition of *Muslim Shrines in India*. This book has been a landmark in the study of South Asian Islam and remains the most important reference on what Western scholars call the cult of Muslim Saints—a phrase we will discuss latter on—and, more generally, on Sufism in South Asia. It is also to be commended for the massive participation of Indian Muslims who wrote more than half the contributions: this publication thus expresses first the point of view of the concerned people before presenting that of the Western scholars.

Christian Troll has made an excellent presentation of the content of the volume in his introduction to the first edition. I will not repeat him. I propose here to inform the reader of new developments in this field of study, by commenting on recent publications and elaborating on further questions raised in this field of study. India will be taken here in the historical sense of the whole of the subcontinent, also called South Asia, which has a common past: studies of shrines now situated in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka belong to the same scholarly field as the ones which are in the Indian Union.

Since the first edition of this book in 1989, there has been a considerable development of studies on the cult of saints, which materialized in collective publications containing important contributions on South Asia. The most comprehensive of these was published in Paris (Chambert-Loir and Guillot 1995): it opens with a chapter by Michel Chodkiewicz on the importance of saints and their cult in Islamic history; then its covers systematically the whole of the Muslim world from Senegal to China, including chapters on Pakistan by Denis Matringe, India by Marc Gaborieau and Catherine Champion, and Bangladesh by Samuel Landell-Mills. Another French collection on Muslim holy places (Amir-Moezzi 1996) also contains a contribution on India centred on Ghazi Miyan by Marc Gaborieau, and another one on Pakistan by Denis Matringe. Two collective books have also appeared

in English: the first one (Grace Martin and Carl Ernst 1993) concentrates on rituals—with papers by C. Ernst on an Indian pilgrim guide (Ernst 1993) and Regula Qureshi (Qureshi 1993) on mystical concerts—and on political implications; the second one (Werbner and Basu 1999) lays the emphasis on the expression of emotions at Sufi shrines. In addition, individual books looked at shrines from a historical point of view to explore the local development of Sufism in Deccan and Western India (Siddiqi 1989; Ernst 1992), or assessed recent changes (Liebeskind 1998). Lots of data on shrines were also revealed in books concerning the development of Muslim influence in Tamil-Nadu (Bayly 1989) and in Bengal (Eaton 1993 and 2000). Finally, some interesting material has been published on Naqshbandis (Gaborieau, Popovic and Zarcone 1990; Buehler 1998; Digby 2001) and Qadiris (Sanyal 1996 : 97–127; Buehler 2000). An important event just after the publication of the first edition has been the fall of Soviet Union: Russian central Asia wherefrom came the many Indian Sufi orders and Sufi saints has been opened to research scholars, enabling them to place Indian shrines and rituals in a larger geographical and historical perspective. One example is cited below, where I speak of the initiation rites in the Chishtiyya.

The first 'documentary' part of this volume deals at the same time with the history and the rituals of the shrines; for analytical purpose, I will treat these two themes separately in the next two paragraphs. Similarly, the second 'interpretative' part contains a large variety of themes, which will be dealt with separately all along this introduction.

Reflection on the historiography of Muslim shrines has been a notable development of the past twelve years. Two topics have been prominent, of which one is the contrast in the attitude of Western scholars towards the veneration of saints. In an article on Sufism in India, Carl Ernst has sketched a broad picture of the views of the Anglo-Saxon scholars during the colonial period and after (Ernst 2000). On another side, renewed attention has been drawn to the early work of the French scholar Garcin de Tassy (1794–1878), who is mostly known for his work on Urdu and Hindi literature, but who started his career with a remarkable book (now available in an English translation) on the 'particularities of the Muslim religion in India' (Garcin de Tassy 1831). Relying mainly on Urdu texts of the early nineteenth century, he drew a very precise picture of the Indian Muslims' devotions to their saints, giving a precise calendar of their festivals, following the model of indigenous calendars which have recently again attracted the attention of Western scholars (Ernst 1993). While Anglo-Saxon protestant scholars were often critical of the Muslim attitude to their saints, which they found idolatrous, Garcin de

Tassy was much more sympathetic. He compared the prayers recited at Muslim shrines to those found in the Catholic liturgy for saints, stressing that in both cases they are addressed to God, not to the saints, and was thus the first to describe in an exact manner the rituals performed at the tombs (Gaborieau 2000 : 148–56). We shall come back later to this point when describing the rituals of the shrines. The second topic is on the vexed question of the role of Sufi saints in conversion. It has been fashionable since the end of the nineteenth century, by relying on late hagiography and local legends, to credit the saints with an active role in proselytizing and in conversion to Islam, the *locus classicus* of this theory being the famous book by Arnold on *The Preaching of Islam* (1896). Recent historical research has shown that Sufis were not 'missionaries' as Arnold thought, and that they did practically no 'preaching'. It is not so much the saints as their shrines which became, over the centuries, centres of attraction for a newly settled peasantry which was gradually drawn into the fold of Islam (Eaton 1984 and 1993).

The analysis of the rituals performed at the shrines has also progressed considerably, both in description and interpretation. In the present book, the descriptions of rites and festivals were practically limited to the shrines of Ghazi Miyan at Bahraich, Mu'inuddin Chishti at Ajmer, and Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi. We now have in hand a much larger corpus. We may recall the vivid picture given by historians such as P.M. Currie and Richard Eaton of the festivals at Ajmer and Pak-Pattan (Currie 1989; Eaton 1982); special attention should be given to the earlier and very important work of Patricia Jeffery on Nizamuddin (1979 and 1981), which, in this volume, is mentioned only in passing (in the essay by Elizabeth Mann : 161n). Patricia Liebeskind (1998) and Susan Bayly (1989) have also amassed a rich harvest for the shrines they studied in upper India and in Tamil Nadu.

Rituals may be divided into two categories: ordinary and festive. The ordinary rites are those of every day, which are made more solemn on one day of the week, usually on the eve of Friday, i.e. on Thursday evening. Devotees come to the tomb of the saint under the guidance of the caretakers (*khadim*) of the shrine who are usually the descendants of the saints. Men can enter the building where the tomb is enshrined, circumambulate it clockwise in the Hindu fashion (and not anticlockwise as usually done in Islam), deposit an offering, and pray for a favour from God through the mediation of the saint; women have to pray outside. But in order to understand the way these devotions are

performed, and to be able to follow the theological controversies analyzed in the third part of this volume, one has to go into the technicalities of these rites. One may imagine that the devotees address their prayers directly to the saints. Garcin de Tassy has long shown that this was not the case. He could ascertain, by analyzing the prayers called *fâtiha* recited near the tombs, that the devotees do not directly invoke the saints, but address only Allah: 'These prayers,' he wrote, 'are not precisely addressed to the saints; they could not be better compared than to the collects of the mass on the Catholic fêtes of the saints, in which the latter are not directly prayed. Thus, in spite of the great devotion the Indian Muslims have for their saints, one cannot say that they really address prayers to them' (translation mine p. 41; Garcin de Tassy 1831 : 26). A contemporary observer, after carefully studying 'Muslim devotions' all over the world, arrived at a similar conclusion: 'The direct petitions to the saints for their help and intercession represent an extreme usage. A less direct way of seeking their mediation is by offering one's own prayers to God through the reverence due to them.' (Padwick 1961 : 242).

Festivals, when thousands of people come often as pilgrims in procession from remote places, reveal a far more contrasting picture with rituals of various origins. Indeed, the core of the celebrations are of Islamic origin with offerings accompanied by invocations to Allah, not to the saint, and recitation of the Quran. The dates of festivals are fixed, according to ancient Islamic practice, to coincide with the death anniversary of the saints and the Islamic lunar calendar. A second layer, which may be called royal, is stressed in the present volume in the essay by Syed Moini on Ajmer. As several historians (Digby 1986 and 1990; Kumar 2000) have brilliantly shown, the relation of the Chishti saints with the sultans was a very complex one. While they pretended to keep aloof from the court, they made sure that the real authority and control of the territory was their prerogative, and that the sultan could rule only by delegation from them. The real nature of this relation between the sultan and saint came into the open with the Mughal emperor Akbar, who finally recognized Mu'inuddin Chishti and Salim Chishti as the real protectors of the Mughal dynasty (Richards 1978; Streusand 1989) and finally took unto himself all the characteristics of a saint to sacralize his own power (Gaborieau 1992). In the rituals at Ajmer, Khwaja Mu'inuddin is treated as a sultan: he has an orchestra called *naubat khana,* which is a royal privilege, and he is awarded all the honours due to a royal personage. A third layer, which is definitely of Indian origin, has been integrated into the Sufi rituals of the shrine. As Garcin de Tassy stressed long ago, 'The saints . . . replace for the Muslims . . . the

numerous gods of the Hindus . . .' (Garcin de Tassy 1831 : 15; English translation : 35). The best examples are the festivals celebrated according the Hindu luni-solar calendar: the spring celebration (*basant*) is, for instance, found in both Nizamuddin (Jeffery 1981 : 169–71), and in the shrine of Ghazi Miyan in Bahraich (p. 34 in this volume). In the latter, the main festival is also fixed for the beginning of the month of Jyeshth (May–June), according to the Hindu calendar. If we compare the Indian data given by Mahmood in this volume (pp. 24–43) and by Farooqi (2001) with that collected in Nepal (Gaborieau 1996 and 2003a), it is evident that this celebration has taken the place of what was previously a Hindu festival which, in my opinion, is not that of the Sun, as usually believed, but that of the god Indra who is linked, as Ghazi Miyan is, with rain and harvest.

No festival would be complete, at least among the Chishtis, without the mystical concert (*sama*) or *qawwali* as it is usually called in India because it is performerd by singers (*qawwals*) attached to the shrines. This prominent feature is mentioned in this volume only in passing (pp. 257–61), mainly through the review of the book by Regula Qureshi (1986). Important new work has since been done in this field, particularly the edition of the texts of the songs in the repertory of the main *qawwal* of Nizamuddin (Mi'raj Ahmad Qawwal 1998) with recordings (Devos 1995a) as well as translations and descriptions of the concerts (Devos 1995b). A study of the structure of the mystical concert has also recently been published (Matringe 2000). It should be understood that music of the *qawwali* is no entertainment although it tends to be folklorized when adapted by popular singers in Pakistan, or produced in Western theatres; it is a serious art meant to arouse mystical emotions, which may culminate in a real trance during which the devotee is temporarily united with God. This ecstasy is seen as a prefiguration of death, which definitively unites the human soul with God, as illustrated in the celebrated case of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1235), the patron saint of Delhi, who died after being in a continuous trance for four days while listening to *qawwals*. This example was often imitated in India down to the beginning of the twentieth century (Digby 1986 : 61). The shrines thus have important emotional functions.

Having said that, I shall now speak of the main functions of the shrines, which have been dealt with mainly in the second 'interpretative' part of this volume. These may be grouped around two poles: mystical education and intercession.

Mystical education (*tarbiyyat*) was the original purpose of Sufi hospice (*khanqah*). Disciples (*murids*) would stay here in company of their

shaikh, also called *pir*, who would lead the way to the mystical path, initiate them formally, and finally grant the best of them permission to train other disciples in their turn. This aspect has been dealt with briefly in this volume in the essay by Desiderio Pinto—who has also written a book on the subject (Pinto 1995)—Bikram Nanda and Mohammad Talib. Since then, however, several new and interesting avenues have emerged. Mystical education, which is not conspicuous when you visit the shrines, may seem to be on the wane. According to a recent study (Buehler 1998), it is decreasing even among the Naqshbandis who have preserved the tradition of mystical education better than other orders. Nevertheless, mystical training still continues, and new light on the subject has recently been provided. The most detailed research deals with the Naqshbandi order with a study of the practice of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (Ter Haar 1992 : 75–85), and a general historical and sociological study, which has revealed the existence of numerous textbooks written on this subject since the eighteenth century (Buehler 1998 : 98–167). Research has not been so thorough for the other orders, but new facts have come about with the Chishtiyya—data has been compiled from the hagiography (Matringe 2001); a late medieval textbook (Hasan Nizami n.d.) has come to light, illustrating a tradition which has continued to this day (Chittick 1999); and finally, an interesting discovery has been made on the initiation rites of the early Chishtis, which involved shaving the head and pointed to links with such Central Asian orders as Qalandariyya and Yasawiyya in which the Chishtiyya finds its origin (Zarcone 2000). It is here that one sees the benefits of the opening up of Central Asia to research.

Devotees most often come to the shrine in order to gain the intercession of the saint with the help of caretakers who are usually his descendants and who, very often, practise esoteric sciences and distribute amulets. These pilgrims may ask for any kind of favours—either spiritual or material. While some saints are generalists, others have their specialization: for instance, Ghazi Miyan, as mentioned above, is a new avatar of Indra, the god of rain and harvest (Gaborieau 2003a), and he also cures leprosy (Gaborieau 1996). The study of these various specialized roles of the saints and their classification is still in infancy (Gaborieau 1983; see also pp. 243–44 in this volume). There is one role, however, which has lately attracted the interest of several researchers: this is the cure of diseases, illustrated in this volume by Tahir Mahmood's essay on Ghazi Miyan as the 'Messiah of the lepers' (pp. 37–38). As shown by a recent dissertation on 'Sufism and medical sciences in India' (Speziale 2002), the caretakers of the dargahs use a wide variety of cures

for all kinds of afflictions: amulets, magical incantations, prophetic or spiritual medecine (*tibb-i nabawi, tibb-ruhani*) and Galenic or *yunani* medecine. The treatment of mental diseases is of special interest, as Christian Troll mentions in his introduction (p. xiiin), referring to the short essay by Beatrix Pleiderer on the dargah of Mira Datar in Gujarat, and to the shrine of Ervadi in Tamil Nadu. The latter recently drew much attention when the authorities had to close the 'mental hostels' which had mushroomed around the dargah following a fire in which many patients lost their lives. Research conducted by two scholars in the vicinity of Hyderabad allows us to understand what is going on in such places: one was a French medical doctor who, along with his thesis, produced a film showing in detail the treatment of mental patients at the shrine of Murugmalla (Rollier 1981); the other is the author of the above-mentioned dissertation which contains two chapters on the dargahs of Miran Husain Hamawi and Shah Musa Qadiri (Speziale 2002 : part I). The patients, some of them in chains, stay in the shrines accompanied by members of their family who look after them. Each day at fixed hours they are made to go around the tomb of the saint in a clockwise direction, a ritual which induces them to speak out their inner conflicts in the idiom of spirit possession. Their diseases are attributed to spirits who speak through their mouth and get progressively exorcized. In the best cases the afflicted person gets cured, and the healing is attributed to the saint who finally appears in a dream telling the patient that he may leave the shrine. This is the signal that the cure has come to an end.

The lawfulness of the rites of various origins performed at the shrines has been periodically questioned in the history of Islam. These controversies, which are still going on, are the subject of the third 'theological' part of this volume. Christian Troll, in his introduction (p. xiii), regretted that the two papers in this section expressed only the points of view of the opponents of the shrines. The stand of their advocates, the Barelwis, is now better documented, as we shall soon see.

As demonstrated by the late professor Baljon and myself in this volume (pp. 196 : 34n, 238), the source of most objections against rituals performed at shrines can be traced back to Ibn Taymiyya (b. 1328, Damascus) (Memon 1976). He influenced the evolution of the thought of Shah Waliullah (1703–1762) and also inspired most of the polemics which continue in India up to this day: but in which way? The two main schools now opposed to shrine cults are the Ahl-i Hadith and the Deobandis, both of which trace their common origin to two

early nineteenth-century reformers—Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786–1831), a millenarian Sufi, and his ideologue, Isma'il Shahid (1779–1786), a grandson of Shah Waliullah, who started, in 1818, a crusade against the shrines where the crusadors were soon nicknamed 'Wahhabi' by their adversaries. Does this mean they drew their arguments from the Arabian Wahhabis who were strict followers of Ibn Taymiyya? Recent research (Gaborieau 1999) has shown that in all probability the direct inspiration came from Yemen through Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukani (1760–1834) with whom Sayyid Ahmad, Isma'il Shahid and their immediate disciples had connections. Objectively, their views on the shrines resemble more those of Shaukani (Haykel 1997 : 156–71) than those of the Wahhabis. Other factors point that the Ahl-i Hadith, the most literal followers of Isma'il Shahid, still maintain a close connection with Yemen (Preckel 2000 : 70–71).

The lawfulness of shrine cults was reaffirmed after more than half a century of controversies kept alive by the Barelwi school that built a new movement at the end of the nineteenth century, around the person of Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi (1856–1921), an expert on Islamic law and a Qadiri Sufi. His discourse has been sketched by Barbara Metcalf in her book on Deoband (Metcalf 1982 : 296–313), yet he remains largely misunderstood, being considered rather a blind adept of rural customs. A recent thorough study of his attitudes toward the shrines (Sanyal 1996 : 110–20, 231–67) has demonstrated that Ahmad Riza Khan was also in his own way a reformer. He was, as much as the Deobandis, keen on purifying local customs; but he could show, by quoting from Quran and Hadith, that it was perfectly lawful to attribute to the Prophet and to the saints powers which common believers did not have, and to believe in their intercession. It was therefore, in his view, quite legitimate to visit the graves of the saints, and to present offerings provided the invocation was made made in the name of Allah in the orthodox way described earlier. 'The chain of intercession starts at the grave of the local *pir*, and goes right up to the Prophet who is closest to Allah, and whose intercession on one's behalf will never be denied' (Sanyal 1996 : 119). Ahmad Riza Khan was thus reaffirming the conception which had been dominant and considered perfectly orthodox in the Middle Ages.

We must now place the shrines in their social, economic and political context, a question which is directly addressed in this volume only in the essay by Elizabeth Mann on 'Religion, Money and Status . . . .' We

may elaborate on this topic by looking first at the internal hierarchy of the shrines, and then by placing it in the wider context.

It should be stressed at the outset that each shrine has its own rigid social hierarchy. First, woman are subordinate to men as exemplified in the magnificent monograph of Patricia Jeffery on the women of the families of the caretakers of Nizamuddin, who remain confined in their houses as 'frogs in a well' and are dedicated only to their husbands and to the shrine (Jeffery 1979). The men one sees active around in the shrine are rigidly ranked in a world that Regula Qureshi aptly describes as 'quasi-feudal' (Qureshi 1986 : 93; see also p. 260 in this volume) and which has been thoroughly analyzed from an ethnographical point of view by Patricia Jeffery (1979 and 1981). The *khadims*, as they are called, clearly constitute a superior class, which has monopoly over the resources of the shrine in the form of land, revenue, and offerings. Subordinate to them stand, in decreasing order, the 'low caste' fakirs and the menials. The fakirs (see plate 12 in this volume) are usually neglected in the descriptions of the shrines: in contrast with the caretakers who have regular revenue, they are mendicants and therefore despised. Their affiliation to Sufi orders, classified as *be-shar* or 'heterodox' (Gaborieau 1998), varies according to the areas: in Pakistan, they are usually Malangs (Ewing 1984); in northern India, Qalandars according to various reports (Digby 1984); in western and south India, Rifa'is, according to my own observations in Ahmadabad and Bombay. The menials, who are directly subordinate to the caretakers, comprise the water-carriers, the *qawwals* and the sweepers. Curiously enough, the singers who organize mystical concerts and are the repositories of the historical repertoire of mystical poems, rank very low as musicians usually do in the Indian caste society.

This microcosm of the shrines reflects the macrocosm of the South Asian Muslim society, which is largely a caste society except at the apex, where the superior Hindu castes have been replaced by the higher Muslim Ashraf classes, that are ranked according to criteria borrowed from the central Islamic lands (Gaborieau 2003b). The caretakers, who usually claim a foreign origin, fall clearly among the Ashraf and have the highest status in Muslim society. Wealth and power accompanies this status in shrines, richly endowed like those of Pakpattan in Pakistan (Eaton 1984) or Salon near Lucknow, where the caretakers shared the same standard of living and the status symbols as the rich zamindars (Liebeskind 1998 : 124–76). The rich *khadims* belong to the same social class as landlords, and it is symptomatic that in the Pakistani Punjab the word *murid* means both disciple and farmer. Below the Ashraf,

Muslim society is ranked into castes as the Hindu society is, with traders, peasants, respectable artisans, and finally service castes or menials. It is remarkable how the mendicant fakirs belong to this lowermost rank, as do *qawwals*.

The question of the involvement of shrines in modern day politics has hardly been touched in this volume, except in A. R. Saiyed's review of essays by Adrian Meyer and Philip Lewis on Pakistan calling for more research in this domain. There have been, since Saiyed's review, several interesting studies in this domain; they deal however mainly with Pakistan. Of these, two well known ones are on the way the *pirs* of Sind were used by colonial authorities (Ansari 1992) to retain political control of the Province, and on the caretakers of Punjab shrines who were used by the Muslim League for its campaign in favour of the creation of Pakistan (Gilmartin 1988). No comparable study seems to exist for India. It is true that the evolution of Pakistan enabled the *pirs* to continue playing a political role, which they do until this day. In India, on the contrary, the functioning of the shrines has been greatly disturbed after Partition because of mass migrations to Pakistan and as a consequence of land reforms which deprived the shrines of personnel and revenue, and therefore, of part of their political influence. Nevertheless, there remains a need for research on their existing political role in the present Indian context.

Finally, especially with the reviews in the fourth part, the present volume also serves as a reference book for the study of Sufi orders in India in general. Since 1989 new work has been abundant. Some of the books already mentioned have enriched our knowledge of the spread of Sufi orders in some areas of the subcontinent, like the Deccan (Siddiqi 1989) and Bengal (Eaton 1993). But the bulk of the new work has been done on particular Sufi orders. The Chishtiyya—up to now the best studied Indian order—has continued to attract the attention of scholars much aided by an annotated translation of the *Malfuzat* of Nizamuddin Awliya (Lawrence 1992), a monograph on the spread of the Chishtiyya in western India (Ernst 1992) and a general history of this brotherhood in South Asia and beyond (Ernst and Lawrence 2000). Pride of place has been given to the Naqshbandiyya: there first appeared a general book on its history with special reference to its various Indian branches, particularly the Mujjadidiyya which spread in Central Asia and the Middle East (Gaborieau, Popovic and Zarcone 1990); then most of the studies concentrated on the Mujaddidiyya with a comprehensive

monograph on Ahmad Sirhindi, the founder of the Mujaddidiyya (Ter Haar 1992), and a remarkable monograph showing how the Naqshbandiyya evolved in Indo-Pakistan from its appearance in the sixteenth century to the present day—when the *shaikh* has practically ceased to be a mystical guide and mediator, and the Sufi order has taken the shape of a modern association (Buehler 1998). In contrast to this popular trend, Simon Digby has unearthed a pre-Mujaddidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya, which came to the Deccan in Aurangzeb's time (Digby 2001). Up to now the other two majors orders, Qadiriyya and Suhrawardiyya, had been neglected but now research has begun in earnest on the hagiography of the Qadiriyya (Lawrence 1993) and on its spread all over South Asia (Buehler 2000). The Suhrawardi order, however, has not yet attracted any significant attention. Few of the minor orders have been studied: the Shattariyya has aroused a new interest among scholars because of its involvement in politics with the first Mughal rulers and its tradition of practicing occult sciences and Yoga (Eaton 1993 : 77–82; Ernst 1999); an interesting ethnographic report on the Rifa'is has come from Sri Lanka (McGilvray 1988). There remains, nonetheless, a need for more research on most of the minor orders, especially the 'heterodox ones' (Gaborieau 1998), some of which, like the Madariyya, still play a significant role in the lives of the common Muslims in India.

As a conclusion, we may insist on the resilience of Sufi shrines in South Asian Islam and indeed, in the whole of the Muslim world. Fundamentalists and modernists—who often have a common inspiration—have hoped for their disappearance, and even often predicted it. But the shrines are still there, as alive as ever, be they prestigious as that of Mu'inuddin Chishti in Ajmer, or popular as that of Ghazi Miyan in Bahraich: both these dargahs continue to attract about five lakh pilgrims on their annual festival. They also continue to serve as a meeting place for people belonging to every station of life and every religious tradition. Even if the management of the shrines is 'quasi-feudal', anybody rich or miserable can come and partake of the *langar*, the free meals distributed everyday. Women—who in South Asia are not allowed in the mosques—can come and pray here, although they are not allowed to enter the building which shelters the tomb. Frequent visitors also comprise non-Muslims, turning the shrines into places where various religious traditions of the subcontinent converge; not only are their adepts physically present, but they find the rituals and the idea of intercession which goes with it congenial. As I stressed in the conclusion of my essay (p. 234 of this volume), the spread of the so-

called 'Wahhabi' doctrine in the nineteenth century has resulted in an increase—religious as well as sociological—in the distance between Hindus and Muslims. Fortunately, these opponents of saint cults have not succeeded in eradicating a form of devotion that attracts such a variety of people. The shrines will continue, it is hoped, to remain decisive meeting points of religious communities in the Indian landscape.

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Preface to the First Editon

The Muslims of India form a significant part of the Islamic world. Their life and thought are of interest in several ways. Unlike most other groups in the Muslim world, Indian Muslims have been living for centuries as a minority in a land largely shaped by Hinduism. Today they live, together with other communities, within the framework of a free, pluralist and secular India. Their numerical strength and varied religio-cultural traditions are quite impressive.

There is a definite need for a flow of information, as well as analyses of significant events and publications, on Indian Islam in its various dimensions. Awareness is the essential precondition for harmonious living. The regional diversities of Indo-Muslim life are little known, largely because of language difficulties, and it is time to begin looking more closely by means of empirical studies at the varying social and regional aspects of the beliefs and practices of Indian Muslims.

The present volume is the fourth in the series called *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, which aims at a scholarly presentation of these matters, with special emphasis on the religious dimension of India's Muslim life, both past and present. The series is meant to assist all those who wish to focus attention on Islam in India.

I am deeply grateful to friends and colleagues in India who have inspired and helped me during the preparation of this volume, especially the assistant editors and members of the advisory board, in particular the late Professor A. R. Saiyed, as well as M. Talib and S. A. I. Tirmizi.

We all deeply regret the sudden demise of Professor A. R. Saiyed while this volume was in press. He will be sorely missed as a competent, inspiring and ever-helpful friend, especially in matters pertaining to this series. We deem ourselves fortunate to publish herein one of his last scholarly essays.

Very special thanks go to Syed Vahiduddin, Paul Jackson, S. J. and D. Pinto, S. J.; and last but not least to Masroor Ahmad, my faithful and competent secretary throughout the better part of the twelve years I was privileged to spend in Delhi, to which I look

back from my new station with fond and rich memories. Finally, I wish to thank the Adam Schall von Bell Foundation in Cologne, West Germany, for financial support towards the project that has resulted in this volume.

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Introduction

In the religious life of the Muslims of India—besides *'alim, mufti* and mosque—shrine, saint and *pir* play central roles. Muslim shrines conspicuously mark Indian Muslim space. The tombs of venerated saints, whether actual or empty, may exist in their bare shape or are architecturally adorned. In the former case they are called *maqbara* (tomb), *turba* (heap of dust) or *maqam* (place); in the latter *mazar, ziyaratgah* (a place of visit or pilgrimage) or *dargah* (*lit.* place of access, shrine). Some of the finest specimens of Indo-Muslim architecture are dargahs, buildings erected on and around saints' tombs.

The rhythm of Muslim life in India remains marked by the performance of rites, customs and festivals relating to the saints and their tombs. Not surprisingly, the general descriptive works dealing with Muslim life in India have given attention to this feature of Islam in India.[1] And recently, more and more publications have focussed on Muslim shrines and the beliefs and practices relating to them.[2]

It seems appropriate to add to this current the present volume of studies and commentaries. Its chief aim is to bring together a number of different approaches to the study of the dargah: documentary, interpretive and theological. Iqtidar H. Siddiqui, well known for his familiarity with the vast published and unpublished

[1] Cf. e.g. Ja'far Sharif and G. A. Herklots, *Islam in India or the Qanun-i-Islam* (Oxford: OUP, 1921; John A. Subhan, *Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines* (Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1938). For a more recent general treatment see A. Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden-Köln: E. J. Brill, 1980), pp. 126–38.

[2] Cf. the articles listed by A. R. Saiyed. Also, M. Geijbels, 'The Veneration of Saints in Islam, with special reference to Pakistan', *MW* 68 (1978), pp. 176–86; Harald Einzmann, *Ziarat und Pir-e-Muridi* [*sic*]. *Golra Sharif, Nurpur Shahan and Pir Baba: Drei Muslimische Walfahrtstätten in Nordpakistan* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verl. Wiesbaden, 1988). The Oxford D. Phil. thesis (Faculty of Oriental Studies, 1978) by P. M. Currie on 'The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in al-Chishti of Ajmer' has just been published (i.e. 1989) by Oxford University Press, India. It is a contribution of major importance.

source material relating to medieval Indo-Muslim history, analyses the social role that early Chishti dargahs played in Indian society and asks how they affected social and cultural life. Tahir Mahmood sketches a multifaceted and vivid picture of one of the oldest and most popular shrines of northern India, that of Salar Mas'ud of Bahraich, which happens to be in his home town. To the historical, architectural, 'liturgical', legendary and administrative aspects evoked by this study, I. H. Siddiqui adds a critical note on the historical origins of this dargah, contrasting legend with the factual information available in contemporary sources.[3]

S. A. I. Tirmizi shows how the shrine of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti of Ajmer has over the centuries come to house primary source material of great value to the historian of the Mughal period. Syed Moini combines the privilege of an intimate knowledge of the devotional life at Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti's shrine—he belongs to one of the leading *khadim* families there—with the skills of a trained scholar of Indian history. He is thus able to offer a detailed account of the rites performed, following the daily, weekly and annual cycles operative at the shrine of the most venerated saint of Muslim India. The contributions of Z. A. Desai and P. Jackson show us how a whole network of shrines has come to impress its stamp on two regional capital cities. Desai concentrates on architectural features, whereas Jackson stresses the links of the shrines with the citizen's daily life.

The interpretive essays of Part Two look analytically, from a limited number of angles, at the economic, social and religious reality of Muslim shrines. D. Pinto examines the meaning of the dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya for pilgrims, as well as the role the shrine attendants (*pirzade*) play in the life of their visitors. B. N. Nanda and M. Talib explore how the relationship between a given saint and his dargah on the one hand, and their devotees on the other, is carried through the *pir-murid* relationship into everyday life and into areas physically far removed from the site of the shrine. E. A. Mann inquires into a locally important dargah as the arena for competition over the control of its financial resources. Important conclusions emerge from her study of the meaning of power and status among the Muslims around this particular shrine, as well as

[3] Cf. also Kerrin Gräfin von Schwerin, 'Saint Worship in Indian Islam: the Legend of the Martyr Salar Masud Ghazi', in Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981), pp. 143–61.

beyond. M. Ishaq Khan views the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar, the repository of the sacred hair of the Prophet Muhammad, as a system of cultural symbols. He endeavours to detect the meaning and direction given by the sanctuary to the social and political action of local Muslims.

The theological evaluation of the beliefs and practices relating to the veneration of saints at shrines was originally planned to be representative of the main schools of theological thought. Besides the towering Shah Waliullah (1703–63), whose views and practices are presented by J. M. S. Baljon and M. Goborieau's annotated translation of an Indian 'wahhabi's' tract on this subject, we had been promised short accounts of the Sufis' and of the Barelwi school's arguments in this matter. Unfortunately, these contributions did not materialize in time. Obviously, there is much room for research in this and related areas. Similarly, we were not able to include a case study on Bombay Shi'ite views and practice regarding the veneration of shrines. We had also planned to present a study of how novels and short stories in Urdu and other Indian vernaculars mirror, approvingly or disapprovingly, the shrine-related practices and beliefs of Muslims.[4] In short, large areas remain to be explored.[5]

Omar Khalidi's review article of R. B. Qureshi's pioneering work on *Sufi Music in India and Pakistan* evokes a further dimension within the study of the dargah. It lists a number of writings essential for an up-to-date study of the Muslim theological evaluation of religious music.[6] The three final contributions to the volume should be helpful in assessing some of the more important recent works on Sufi themes. At places they raise various points relating to the veneration of saints and their shrines.

[4] See A. Schimmel, p. 138.

[5] Certain shrines and their saints are famous for meeting special needs. For a study of a shrine famous for healing psychiatric and sociogenic diseases, see e.g. Beatrix Pfleiderer, 'Mira Datar Dargah: The Psychiatry of a Muslim Shrine,' in Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), pp. 195–233. An informative piece of journalism dealing with a comparable shrine in southern Tamil Nadu is by Madhu Jain, 'Ervadi Dargah: Prisoners of the Mind', *India Today*, 15 Oct. 1987, pp. 140–9.

[6] See also R. B. Qureshi, 'The *Mahfil-e-Sama*: Sufi Practice in the Indian Context', *Islam in the Modern Age*, 17 (1986), pp. 133–65.

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*The information provided here was correct as the time when the first edition was published in 1989. The publisher would be happy to hear of any subsequent change.

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The Early Chishti Dargahs*

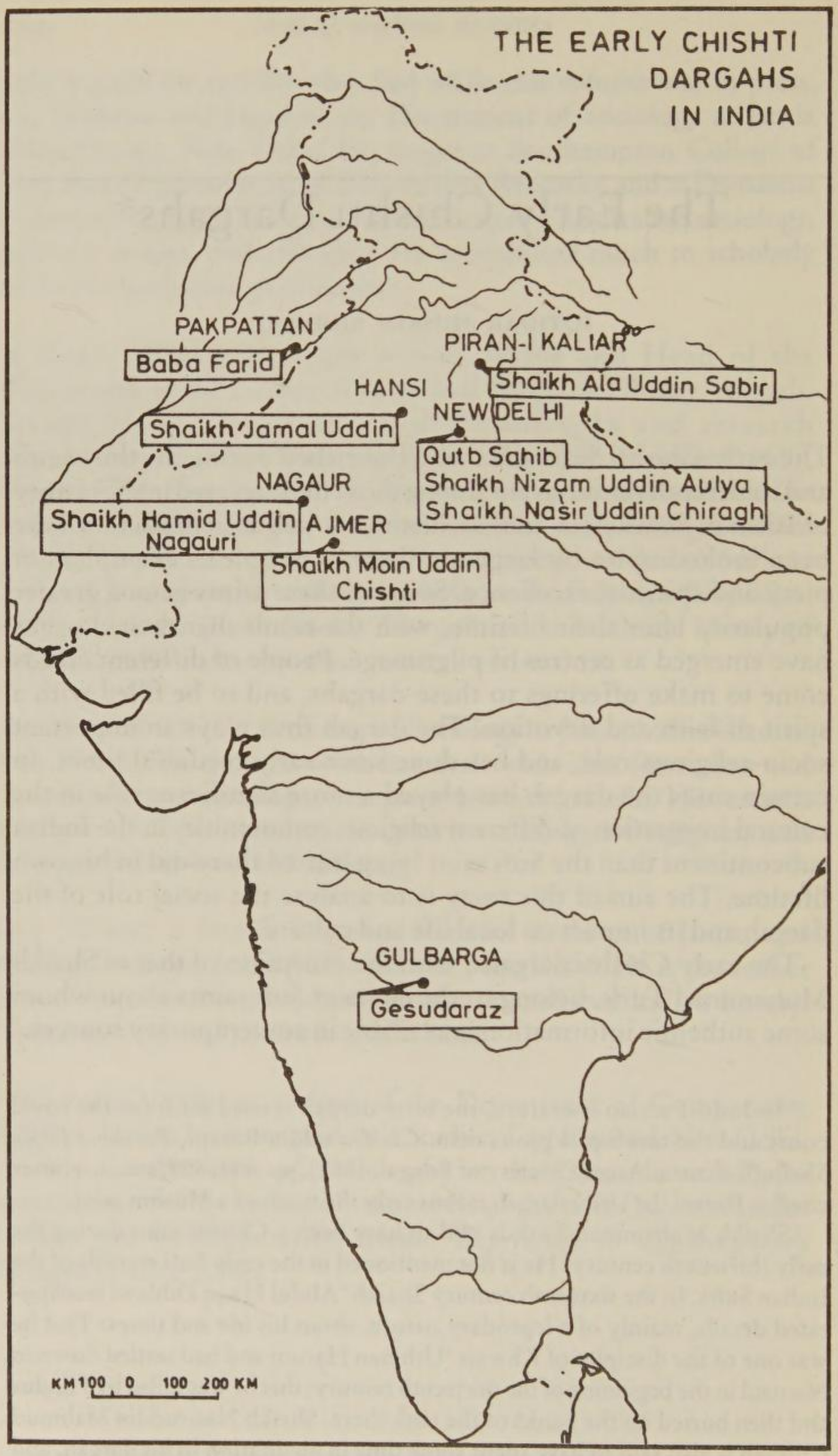
IQTIDAR HUSAIN SIDDIQUI

The early Chishti Sufi saints who flourished during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are among those most revered in the history of Islam in South Asia. In their lifetime as well as in death they have been looked upon by large numbers of people as exemplars of piety and spiritual excellence. Some of these saints gained greater popularity after their lifetime, with the result that their dargahs have emerged as centres of pilgrimage. People of different creeds come to make offerings to these dargahs, and to be filled with a spirit of faith and devotion. The dargah thus plays an important socio-religious role, and has done since early medieval times. In certain cases the dargah has played a more significant role in the cultural integration of different religious communities in the Indian subcontinent than the Sufi saint lying buried there did in his own lifetime. The aim of this essay is to analyse the social role of the dargah and its impact on local life and culture.

The early Chishti dargahs, with the exception of that of Shaikh Muhammad Turk, belong to the eminent Sufi saints about whom some authentic information is available in contemporary sources.[1]

* In Indo-Persian literature, the term dargah is used both for the royal court and the tomb of a pious man. Cf. Zia'uddin Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862), pp. 494, 499, etc., hereafter cited as Barani. In Urdu dargah means only the tomb of a Muslim saint.

[1] Shaikh Muhammad Turk is said to have been a Chishti saint during the early thirteenth century. He is not mentioned in the early Sufi records of the Indian Sufis. In the sixteenth century Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq Dihlawi incorporated details, mainly of a legendary nature, about his life and times: That he was one of the disciples of Khwaja 'Uthman Haruni and had settled down in Narnaul in the beginning of the thirteenth century; that he was killed by Hindus and then buried on the banks of the tank there. Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud Chiragh is also said to have spent some time in meditation in his dargah, and


THE EARLY CHISHTI
DARGAHS
IN INDIA
PAKPATTAN
Baba Farid
HANSI
Shaikh Jamal Uddin
NAGAUR
Shaikh Hamid Uddin
Nagauri
AJMER
Shaikh Moin Uddin
Chishti
PIRAN-I KALIAR
Shaikh Ala Uddin Sabir
NEW DELHI
Qutb Sahib
Shaikh Nizam Uddin Aulya
Shaikh Nasir Uddin Chiragh
GULBARGA
Gesudaraz
KM 100 0 100 200 KM

Four of these early dargahs, located in different towns and cities in north India, belong to the thirteenth century. The oldest dargahs are those of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi, the founder of the Chishti *silsila* (order) in India. He is popularly known as Khwaja Gharib Nawaz, died in 1235 and was buried here. His *khalifa* (spiritual successor), Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, popularly known as Qutb Sahib, is associated with a second old dargah. Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (hereafter Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki) died in Delhi in the same year as his *pir*, in 1235. As for the two remaining thirteenth-century Chishti dargahs, they belong to Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi Nagauri, whom his pir (religious preceptor), Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi, had posted in Nagaur, where he died in 1276; and the other to Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakr, popularly known as Baba Farid, who died in 1265. The latter was the khalifa of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki, and his dargah is located in Pakpatan in Pakistan. Both Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi and Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki were Sufi saints from Central Asia. Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi of Nagaur[2] and Baba Farid, on the other hand, were Indian-born Sufis.[3] Their dargahs command immense respect among people of different religious communities in the countries of South Asia.

The popularity of a dargah depended upon the spiritual excellence and noble qualities deemed to have been possessed by the saint in his lifetime; upon the spiritual greatness of his immediate successors; and upon the expansion of the *silsila* and the legends that developed afterwards about the supernatural powers of the dargah. Enough information exists to reconstruct the missionary work and the

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supposedly said that anyone who would pray there for relief in distress or the fulfilment of his wishes would not be disappointed. However, all this seems to have been concocted by local people to turn the place into a centre of pilgrimage. Sikandar Lodi had such fake Sufi graves demolished. Cf. *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, (Delhi: Muhammadi Press, AH 1283), pp. 50–1; Rizqullah Mushtaqi, 'Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi', MS., British Library, London, no. Add. 11, 633, f. 27b.

[2] Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi Nagauri was born in Delhi after its conquest by the Muslim army. Later he said he was the first Muslim to be born in Delhi. Cf. Anonymous, 'Surur al-Sudur', the collection of malfuzat or utterances of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi and Shaikh Fariduddin, MS., Habib Ganj Collection, Aligarh, p. 219 (folios not marked).

[3] Cf. K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakr* (Aligarh, 1955; rpt. Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1973), for biographical details.

change that the image of each Sufi underwent in the eyes of later generations. For a proper understanding of the role played and the popularity gained by a dargah it seems necessary to analyse briefly the historical material about the life, teachings and work of the saint lying buried therein.

Biographical details available in the standard sources about the saint of the dargah in Ajmer, Mu'inuddin Sijzi, are scanty. Later writers have incorporated popular legends about him which were current in their times. Even the account furnished by Mir Khurd in the *Siyar al-Auliya'*, a late-fourteenth-century work, is not free from hagiographic embroidery. Mir Khurd's statement about the date of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi's arrival in India has been accepted by modern scholars uncritically. According to Mir Khurd the Shaikh, having come to India, settled down in Ajmer under the rule of Rai Pithora when there was no Muslim population there.[4] Many popular legends about the miraculous powers the Shaikh is said to have displayed seem to have been fabricated on the basis of Mir Khurd's account. This has, however, contributed greatly to the prestige and popularity of the dargah in Ajmer since medieval times.

The supernatural aura that has surrounded the saint and his dargah needs to be looked at dispassionately. Modern scholars have portrayed him either by exaggerating the facts or belittling the importance of his missionary work. For instance, Yusuf Husain says:

> From Lahore, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti went to Delhi and then to Ajmer which was ruled by Rai Prithvi Raj. One cannot think without admiration of this man, almost alone, living among people who considered the least contact with a Muslim as defilement. Sometimes he was even refused water to drink. In the torrid climate of Rajputana that was the hardest punishment one can imagine. The high-caste priests demanded of the Raja of Ajmer that he should banish the Khwaja, whose influence had begun to make itself felt among the lower classes of the place. The Raja sent the order of expulsion through Ram Deo, head of the priests of Ajmer. Legend relates that in approaching the Khwaja, Ram Deo was so much impressed by his personality that he became, from that very moment, a faithful disciple of the Khwaja and spent his life in the service of the helpless and the downtrodden.[5]

[4] Saiyid Muhammad Mubarak Kirmani, known as Mir Khurd, *Siyar al-Auliya* (Delhi: Muhibb-i Hind Press, AH 1302), pp. 46–7.

[5] Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1959), p. 37.

Differing from Yusuf Husain and other scholars, S. A. A. Rizvi states, on the basis of sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century works, that Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi came to India and settled in Ajmer in 1206, during the reign of Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak. He also denies the impact of his teaching on the local population in Ajmer and the area around.[6] Neither the testimony of Mir Khurd nor the details contained in the later works utilized by Rizvi are acceptable. It is the early unmixed sources, hitherto neglected, which help us here. The relevant evidence contained in the *malfuzat* (collection of utterances) of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagauri and the latter's spiritual successor, Shaikh Fariduddin Nagauri, reveals that, like other emigrant Sufi saints, Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi came to Delhi and thence proceeded to Ajmer during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish, after the Hindu resistance in the region had been subdued. The (translated) passage needs to be quoted:

> Shaikh Najibuddin Nakhshabi, the Shaikh-ul-Islam of Delhi, was one of the friends of Shaikh Mu'inuddin [Sijzi], hereafter mentioned as Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti. All of them, forty in number, arrived in Delhi during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin [Iltutmish]. The Sultan is said to have given every one of them a good amount of money. Shaikh Najibuddin distributed the amount to the people and also spent some of it in hosting a banquet to feed people. He stayed in Delhi. The Sultan [having been impressed by his qualities] called him 'father' out of sheer respect and also honoured him with the title of Shaikh-ul-Islam of Delhi. His friends moved from Delhi to other places [in the Sultanate]. Of them, Shaikh Mu'inuddin took abode in Ajmer.[7]

Another standard source is the 'Tarikh-i Muhammadi', compiled in 1436. Its compiler, Muhammad Bihamad Khani, seems to have carefully sifted historical material from miscellaneous sources about the early sultans, poets and Sufis who flourished in India during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He states in a section

[6] S. A. A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Munshilal Manoharlal, 1978), pp. 116–18, 122–3.

[7] As already mentioned, Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi of Nagaur was one of the *khalifas* (spiritual successors) of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti. His malfuzat were incorporated by one of his great grandsons along with the account of the life and teachings of Shaikh Fariduddin Nagauri in the *Surur al-Sudur*, some time during the reign of Firuz Shah (1351–88). The name of the compiler is not mentioned. Cf. 'Surur al-Sudur', MS., Habib Ganj Collection, Aligarh, no. 1361, pp. 227–8 (folios not marked).

related to the Sufi saints: 'During the turmoil, caused by Chingiz Khan's invasion, he migrated from Khurasan to India and settled down in Ajmer, one of the important fortified places in India. He had already distinguished himself in piety and devotion [to God]. He arrived in India during the early years of Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish's reign.'[8] Further evidence, available in the 'Fawaid al-Fu'ad', the malfuzat of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325), suggests that the Shaikh was a man of wide sympathies and lived for the service of God and mankind.[9] The legends that developed around his personality later made him appear a miracle of compassion and tolerance.

The traditions recorded in the Sufi literature produced from the fourteenth century onwards about the dargah of Mu'inuddin Chishti in Ajmer reveal that his image underwent a change as the influence and popularity of his dargah increased with the passage of time. Different factors account for this. First, Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti's piety as well as the traditions of extreme austerity embraced by him in his lifetime inspired later generations of people. Second, the greatness of his spiritual successors, particularly Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar and Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, contributed to the popularity of the dargah of Ajmer and that of his immediate successor, Qutb Sahib in Delhi. As the founder of the Chishti silsila in India, devotees of the dargahs of his successors had also to cherish his memory and pay a visit to his dargah. Indirect references contained in the *Siyar al-Auliya* to the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam—as a result of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti's efforts in Ajmer and the area around—are not free from exaggeration. It may, however, be assumed that some low-caste Hindus may have embraced Islam under his influence.[10] On the other hand the dargah certainly did play a role in this regard, as later sources suggest.

Shaikh Jamali Dihlawi, who flourished during the first half of the sixteenth century, incorporated in his work, *Siyar al-'Arifin*, all the stock-in-trade anecdotes about the early saints. The details

[8] Muhammad Bihamad Khani, 'Tarikh-i Muhammadi', MS., British Library, London, no. Or. 137, f. 140a.

[9] K. A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961).

[10] Mir Khurd, *Siyar al-Auliya* (Delhi: Muhibb-i Hind, AH 1302), p. 47.

furnished by him, however, also contain interesting information about the dargah's role in the cultural integration of the two major communities—Hindus and Muslims—in India. Visitors to the dargah in Ajmer included both Muslims and Hindus who approached it, as they still do today, with different spiritual, psychological and economic problems, and returned in peace and filled with hope on account of their faith in the *barakat* (blessings) of the dargah. Jamali, who had written his account of the Shaikh after his visit to Ajmer, states: 'Many important infidels of the region entered the fold of Islam because of the blessings of the tomb [or grave] of that embodiment of piety [the Shaikh] and the essence of divine secrets.' Unconverted Hindus also often remained sincerely attached to the dargah, paid visits there, and made offerings in cash or kind. Their descendants followed this tradition.[11] It is worth recalling that in medieval times Hindus and Muslims often vowed offerings to a patron saint or deity if their prayers were answered. Sometimes, faced with serious problems such as the illness of an only son or the desire for a male child, Hindus seem to have vowed that they would accept Islam. For Hindus, and often for new converts to Islam whose conversion was partial, the dargah was a substitute for the idol.

A visit paid by a mighty ruler to a dargah also raised its prestige in the eyes of the populace. The first sultan reported to have visited the dargah in Ajmer was Muhammad bin Tughluq (1324–51). According to 'Isami the sultan, having subdued the Kachhwaha rebels in the region now included in Rajasthan, proceeded to Ajmer to visit the dargah.[12] In fact it had become established custom for the sultan to visit the dargah of an eminent Sufi if he happened to be in its vicinity, and to distribute money to the servitors of the dargah.[13] The motive behind such royal visits was no doubt political rather than religious, this being a method of enhancing regal popularity, even as it reinforced belief in the power of the dargah.

The little evidence that is available in fifteenth and sixteenth-century sources tends to suggest that the dargah of Ajmer did not

[11] Shaikh Jamali, *Siyar al-'Arifin* (Delhi: Rizwi Press, AH 1311), pp. 4–16.

[12] 'Isami, *Futuh al-Salatin*, ed. Usha (Madras: Madras University, 1949), p. 466.

[13] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. 3, ed. and trans. Sir Hamilton Gibb (Cambridge: The University Press, 1971).

become the leading shrine in India until the first half of the sixteenth century. On the dissolution of the Delhi Sultanate after the sack of Delhi by Timur in 1398 the territories of Ajmer and Nagaur were occupied by the Hindu Rais (chieftains), and Muslims ejected from them. The latter sought refuge either in Gujarat or in Malwa, the *muqta's* (governors) of which had assumed independence.[14] In 1455 Sultan Mahmud Khalji of Malwa is reported to have led a military expedition for the conquest of Ajmer. Shihab Hakim, the official historian, says that Ajmer, which had been an Islamic centre since the early days of Muslim rule and the abode of the greatest of the saints, his holiness Shaikh Mu'inuddin, was turned into *dar-ul-harb* (a place seized by the enemy). The sultan of Malwa had his camp pitched near the *rauza* (grave) of the Shaikh, and laid siege to the Ajmer fort held by Gajdhar, the *muqaddam* (chief). The fighting lasted for four days and, on the fifth day, the fort was captured. Gajdhar killed his dependants. Khwaja Na'imullah Muhazzab was granted the title of Saif Khan and entrusted with the government of Ajmer.[15]

The scanty evidence available in the sixteenth century works, 'Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi' and *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, suggests that no structure was ever raised over the grave of the Shaikh till the end of Sultan Mahmud Khalji's reign (d. 1468–9). According to Shaikh Rizqullah Mushtaqi, Shaikh Husain Nagauri, the Sufi descendant of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi of Nagaur,[16] had the tomb built over the grave in Ajmer with the money that he got from Sultan Ghiyathuddin Khalji of Malwa (1469–1500).[17] Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq adds that the area around the grave of the Shaikh in Ajmer had turned

[14] Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq Dihlawi, *Akhbar al-Akhyar* (Delhi: Maṭba' Hashimi, AH, 1280), pp. 174–5; also H. B. Sarda, *Maharana Kumba* (1932), p. 14, as cited by S. A. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through Inscriptions* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, 1968), p. 12.

[15] Ali Bin Mahmud al-Kirmani, known as Shihab Hakim, *Ma'athir-i Mahmud Shahi*, ed. Nurul Hasan Ansari, (Delhi: Jamal Printing Press, 1968), pp. 84–5.

[16] Shaikh Husain Nagauri was the leading Chishti saint during the fifteenth century. Cf. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'Resurgence of Chishti' Silsilah in the Sultanate of Delhi During the Lodi Period,' *Islam in India*, vol. 2, ed. C. W. Troll (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1984), pp. 61–4, for details.

[17] 'Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi,' MS., British Library, London, no. 11633, ff. 76b–77a.

into a wilderness and abounded in wild animals, including tigers. There was no structure over the grave. Shaikh Husain Nagauri built the tomb.[18] At another place 'Abdul Haqq states that Ajmer was again seized by Maldeo, the raja of Jodhpur, and idols were placed over the tomb of the Shaikh sometime in A.D. 1526.[19]

Source material about the dargah of Ajmer shows that it had not come into the limelight until Akbar's reign, although sultans, princes and others venerated the Shaikh lying buried there and paid visits to his grave whenever they passed the territory—Ajmer was situated along the trade route linking Delhi with Gujarat. There is, however, not a shred of evidence to suggest that people travelled only to visit the dargah and make vows there during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For this purpose they visited local dargahs, genuine as well as fake, which seem to have existed in every town and city, at least during the fourteenth century.[20] An important custom that seems to have become established in the fourteenth century was that the Sufis began to consider it obligatory to visit the dargahs of prominent Sufis of the silsila in the country.[21] This seems to have influenced the élite and masses during the subsequent period, and as a result the dargah of Ajmer became one of the most popular by the time Akbar ascended the throne.[22] It was the spirit and enthusiasm possessed by pilgrims to Ajmer that seems to have inspired Akbar, who also became a devotee. He began to pay visits, sometimes twice or thrice a year, and implored the Shaikh's spirit to bless him with new conquests and the birth of sons, and maintained this tradition until 1580.[23] In 1568, when the emperor gained his victory in the battle against Rana Udai Singh of Mewar, he went to Ajmer to give thanks. On this occasion he also offered a brazen cauldron of gigantic size to the dargah, in order that the traditional

[18] *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, pp. 174–5.

[19] Ibid., p. 292.

[20] Sultan Firuz Shah is said to have banned visits by women to dargahs in Delhi and other places, for it provided occasion for promiscuous meetings. Later, Sikandar Lodi had fake graves attributed to saintly persons demolished in his empire because visitors made offerings, and were thus cheated. Firuz Shah, *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi*, ed. Sh Abdul Rashid (Aligarh: Univ. Press, 1954), pp. 8–9; Shaikh Rizqullah Mushtaqi, 'Waqi 'at-i Mushtaqi,' f. 27b.

[21] *Siyar al-Auliya*, p. 264.

[22] Shaikh Ruknuddin, *Lata'if-i Quddusi* (Delhi: Mujtabai Press, AH 1311).

[23] Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: 1873), pp. 154–5.

hotchpotch be cooked in it for a large number of people.[24] A mosque was also constructed by his orders in the dargah compound. In short, Akbar's veneration greatly contributed to the influence and prestige of the dargah. It also considerably added to the prestige and influence of Shaikh Husain Ajmeri, the *sajjada* (custodian) of the dargah. In 1570, when Akbar found him opposed to his religious policy, he was banished from Ajmer and sent to Bhakkar fort as a political prisoner, for it was feared that he could preach hatred against the emperor among people in Ajmer and the adjacent area.[25] Since then the *mutawalli* or sajjada of Ajmer dargah was the emperor's nominee and could enjoy his position only at the royal pleasure.

Akbar's successors also showed respect to the dargah of Ajmer. They visited it and had a number of beautiful buildings added to the complex. In 1614 Jahangir gave to the dargah a cauldron larger than the one his father had given. He also had food cooked in it that sufficed for more than 5000 people.[26] The beautiful mosques constructed in Ajmer on Shah Jahan's order and the gardens planted by him still fascinate tourists.[27] But the present cauldrons, also gigantic in size, are of recent origin.

The dargahs of the spiritual successors of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti, both his khalifas (immediate successors) and the chief disciples of the latter, located at different places in north India, also became important centres of pilgrimage for Muslims and Hindus. Their popularity also depended on notions about the spiritual excellence possessed by these men in their lifetime; the successful career of their *murids* (spiritual disciples); the legends that the servitors invented and spread about the miraculous powers of the dargah; and finally on the size and cultural importance of the city where the dargah was located. A careful scrutiny of the material on the dargah of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki, chief khalifa of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti, available in medieval sources, supports this impression. All these factors made the dargah one of the most

[24] S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through Inscriptions*, p. 19.

[25] Mulla 'Abdul Qadir Badayuni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, vol. 3, (Calcutta: Asiatic Society), p. 88.

[26] Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, vol. 1, English translation Rogers, ed. Beveridge (London: 1909; rpt. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978), p. 341.

[27] *Ajmer Through Inscriptions*, pp. 13, 15, 17.

important places of pilgrimage in the metropolis of Delhi some time after his death in 1235.

Evidence from fourteenth-century hagiographic as well as historical literature suggests that the dargah of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki did not take long to emerge as a popular centre of pilgrimage. It was certainly unlike the dargah of Ajmer in this regard. The more popular it became, the greater seems to have been the flow of wealth to it. It was the availability of wealth that led the only surviving son of the Shaikh to become fond of luxury and worldly comfort.[28] As regards the factors responsible for the popularity of the dargah, they were—besides putative spiritual excellence—the emergence of Delhi as one of the most important Islamic centres in the eastern Islamic world after Chingiz Khan had destroyed the old centres in Central Asia; and the growth of spurious literature on the Shaikh's life, designed in such a way that the gullible would believe in the blessed powers of the dargah. Likewise, the progress of the Chishti silsila through the missionary work of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar and Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya also contributed to its popularity in north India. That spurious malfuzat of the Shaikh contain apocryphal traditions, certainly concocted by the servitors of the dargah after the death of the Shaikh, further substantiates this fact. Beautiful and edifying, these false traditions impress upon the reader that the mighty ruler, Sultan Iltutmish of Delhi, visited the Shaikh in his *khanqah* twice a week. The Shaikh would advise him to strive for the welfare of the people under his rule, and the sultan acted accordingly.[29] The fake malfuzat 'Fawa' id al-Salikin', the compilation of which is attributed to Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar, contains nothing but falsification. The *Manaqib al-Asfiya*,

[28] *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*, p. 62. The early Chishti saints did not confer *khilafatnama* (authority to enrol *murids* or disciples) on their sons, but one of the sons could become the sajjada of his grave. He had a legal right in this matter.

[29] The legends about the close relations between Iltutmish and Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki are found incorporated in Mir Khurd's *Siyar al-Auliya* and 'Fawa'id al-Salikin' (the so-called collection of the Shaikh's utterances). These tales are devoid of any truth because they do not stand the test of historical scrutiny. The servitors of the dargah had a vested interest in inventing such stories. Every visitor made an offering according to his economic means. Cf. *Siyar al-Auliya*, pp. 52–3, 54–5; 'Fawa'id al-Salikin', p. 19, as quoted by K. A. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture* (Allahabad: Kitāb Mahal 1966), pp. 29, fn. 62.

the biographical work on the early Firdausi Sufis, reveals that rival Sufis of the Firdausi silsila were in the later half of the fourteenth century led by this literature to believe that Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki was fond of making a display of his miraculous powers, which goes against the traditions of sobriety.[30] According to Shaikh Nizam-uddin Auliya, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi and Shaikh Muhammad Gesudaraz, the malfuzat collections and treatises attributed to the early Chishti saints were spurious.[31] The authentic traditions about the great Sufi saint incorporated in the *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad* leave no doubt that Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki kept aloof from the royal court and thought contact with it injurious to spiritual life; that he was fond of *sama'* (devotional songs and music), and listened secretly because the ulama were opposed to it and the sultan, being under their influence, did not allow music even to the Sufis. Sama' was regarded by orthodox Muslims as a sinful innovation.[32] Nevertheless, gullible people, both Hindus and Muslims, could not be prevented by the ulama from paying visits to the Shaikh or, later, his dargah.

In the long run, the repetition of legends and tales by professional Sufis or by devotees of the Sufi saints made them seem credible, and these thus fostered gullibility. By the turn of the thirteenth century the dargah of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki had gained immense popularity and prestige. In 1333, when Ibn Battuta arrived in Delhi, he found it one of the three most popular pilgrimage places in the metropolitan city of Delhi. The remaining two dargahs belonged to non-Sufi scholars of law. This is indicative of the fact that in the early period of the Delhi sultanate not only the dargahs or graves of Sufis were considered possessed of blessed powers, the graves or tombs of orthodox scholars who had lived pious and austere lives, without Sufi inclinations, were also venerated. Ibn Battuta's eye-witness account is worth quoting:

One of these [dargahs] is the tomb of the pious Shaikh Qutbuddin

[30] *Manaqib al-Asfia*, (*blank*) p. (blank).

[31] *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*, p. 45; Hamid Qalandar, *Khair al-Majalis* (The Collection of Utterances of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh), ed. K. A. Nizami (Aligarh: Dpt. of History, Aligarh Muslim Univ., 1959), pp. 52–3; Saiyid Muhammad Akbar Husaini, *Jawami 'al-Kilam*, (Kanpur: Matba'-í Intizami, AH 1356), p. 134.

[32] *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*, pp. 62, 96, 187, 239–41.

Bakhtiyar Kaki. The blesşed power of this tomb is manifest and it enjoys great veneration. The reason why this Shaikh was called *al-Kaki* is that he used to give all those debtors who came to him to complain of need or poverty or who had daughters and had not the wherewithal to send them with proper outfits to their husbands, a *kaka* (biscuit) of gold or silver and so he became known for that reason as *al-Kaki*. Among them also are the tomb of the eminent legalist Nuruddin-ul-Kurlani and that of the legalist Ala'uddin-ul-Kirmani.[33]

Popular belief in the sanctity and blessed power of this dargah led people belonging to different strata of Muslim society to bury their relations in the compound or in the vicinity of the dargah. Consequently, by the fifteenth century the dargah contained thousands of graves belonging to Sufis, ulama and other notables of Delhi.[34] People desired to be buried near the shrine, believing that their soul would be blessed by the spirit of the Shaikh. Moreover people, both the élite and the masses, believed that the prayer offered at the dargah of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki would bless them with success in difficult circumstances. In 1478, when Sultan Husain Sharqi of Jaunpur attacked Delhi with numerous troops, Sultan Bahlul Lodi is reported to have prayed at the dargah the whole night, standing bare-headed like an ordinary supplicant. At dawn he returned, filled with the hope of gaining success against his rival.[35]

There seems besides to have been a popular belief among Chishti Sufis since the fourteenth century that a stay at the *dargah* in the capacity of servitors would make them special recipients of divine grace. Many devout Sufis occupied cells and spent their time in prayer, meditation and in performing spiritual exercises. Those who resided in the city came there with money for distribution among the people.[36] Their faith heightened cosmic consciousness and, says the 'Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi', enabled them to participate in the cosmic process of life.[37] Many villagers who came to the dargah for blessings in time of distress got in touch with some Sufi there, and some of these villagers adopted the Islamic faith. The description of a villager associated with the dargah shows how devout a religious

[33] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. 3, p. 625.
[34] 'Tarikh-i Muhammadi,' f. 144a–b.
[35] 'Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi', ff. 6b–7a.
[36] Ibid., ff. 101a–b.
[37] 'Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi,' ff. 101a–b.

Muslim he had turned into.[38] Hindus who belonged to rich families also seem to have made vows at the dargah, and sometimes converted to Islam, particularly if their prayers at the dargah were answered.

The dargah of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi, another khalifa of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi of Ajmer, also seems to have gained popularity in Nagaur and western Rajputana towards the close of the thirteenth century. The grant of villages by Muhammad bin Tughluq (1324–51) to the Sajjada-nashin, Shaikh Fariduddin Nagauri, the grandson and khalifa of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi, testifies to its emergence as an important dargah.[39] It was during this reign that the wall around the dargah was constructed by the sultan's order. The sultan is also reported to have given his daughter to Fathullah, a grandson of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi. With the money from the grant of the villages, Shaikh Fariduddin Nagauri was able to possess a large establishment. He had orchards of pomegranates planted and wells and lakes constructed.[40]

The dargah of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar (hereafter Baba Farid d. 1265) has also been an important shrine, being associated with selfless service, piety and extreme austerity of an orthodox character. It was really his popularity that led his sons to bury him in his khanqah against his will, votaries being anticipated from Ajodhan (modern Pakpatan) to offer prayers, invoke his blessings for the fulfilment of their desires, and thereby to financially help his survivors.[41] Since Ajodhan was situated on the merchant caravan route linking Multan, the border city, with Delhi and other parts

[38] Ibid., ff. 23a–b.

[39] The *farmans* issued by the sultan with regard to grants of land found appended to the manuscript copy of the malfuzat of Shaikh Hamiduddin Sufi and Shaikh Fariduddin Nagauri. The copy is available in the Habib Ganj Collection at Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh. Also cf. K. A. Nizami, *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, vol. 1 (Aligarh: Dept. of History, Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 308–10.

[40] Ibid. pp. 308–10.

[41] The Shaikh is reported to have bequeathed a will to the effect that he be buried in the graveyard at Ajodhan, at a place where he often went and sat in meditation. On his death, his will was ignored. His son thought that visitors to the grave would turn away from the graveyard without taking care of his sons and other family members if he was not buried in the khanqah. The wives and children of the early Chishti saints resided in the portion attached to the

of the Delhi sultanate, the merchants, nobles and soldiers travelling from and to Delhi paid visits to the dargah and invoked the saint's help and blessing for success as well as safety from dacoits, illness and wild animals. Ibn Battuta's statement about the flow of wealth to a medieval dargah is worth quoting: 'Travellers on the sea of China make a practice when the wind turns against them and when they fear pirates, to make a vow and on their safe return pay the money to the servitors of the dargah. The ships from China and India carry Muslim merchants.'[42] This applies to the important dargahs in India as well. In fact, this flow of wealth to the dargah had made many sajjadas fond of luxurious living. That is why Saiyid Muhammad Husain, popularly known by the epithets of Gesudaraz and Banda-nawaz (long-haired and the benefactor of the poor), was critical of the sajjadas, most of whom extorted money from people and spent it on their own comfort.[43]

With the expansion of the Chishti silsila's influence in the sub-continent through the missionary work of the khalifas of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325) in provinces as far as Sind in the west, Bengal in the east and Deccan in the south, the early Chishti dargahs began to receive votaries from far and near. It was on account of the high esteem in which the dargah was held that Sultan Firuz Shah seems to have attached great importance to his visit to the dargah after his accession to the throne in 1351. Barani tells us that the sultan not only bestowed robes and land grants on the descendants of Baba Farid but also favoured the residents of Ajodhan by giving them money.[44]

As regards the complex of the dargah, the nobles, merchants and other wealthy people seem to have spent money on raising structures for the comfort and benefit of the pilgrims around the tombs of the important Sufi saints from early times.[45] The dargah

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khanqah. The first sajjada of Baba Farid's dargah was his son, Shaikh Badr-uddin Sulaiman. Visitors seem to have made offerings to him in cash and kind. Cf. *Siyar al-Auliya*, pp. 90, 172–3.

[42] Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. 2, pp. 320–1.

[43] Syed Muhammad Akbar Husaini, *Jawami' al-Kalim* (Kanpur: AH 1356), p. 26.

[44] Ziauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1862), p. 543.

[45] An early-sixteenth-century scholar, Shaikh Hussainuddin Muttaqi, considered it sinful to stand even under the shadow of the wall of the tomb of

of Baba Farid has a number of structures, raised during different times. Servitors seem to have concocted tales about the blessed powers of different places in the dargah complex. For instance, one of the doors leading to the grave is called *bahishti darwaza* (door of paradise), and people attached to the dargah believe that a person will be saved from the fires of hell if the grave is approached through it. C. M. Wade writes:

> There are two doors to this apartment [in which the Shaikh lies buried], one to the north and one to the east. The one to the east, called the 'door of Paradise', is never opened except on the fifth day of the sacred Muharram, when numbers of pilgrims, both Hindus and Muslims, come to visit the shrine, believing that all who pass through this doorway are saved from the fire of perdition. The doorway is about two feet wide and cannot be entered without stooping, and the apartment itself is not capable of containing thirty people crowded together. Yet such is the care which the saint takes of his votaries on the occasions, that no accident or loss of life has ever been known to occur. A superlative heaven is open to those who are first to enter the tomb on the day mentioned. The rush for precedence may, therefore, be better imagined than described. The crowd of pilgrims is said to be immense, and as they egress from the sacred doorway, after having rubbed their foreheads on the foot of the saint's grave, the air resounds with the shouts of Farid! Farid![46]

K. A. Nizami says it is difficult to trace the growth of this legend. No contemporary, or even later, writer having referred to the *bahishti darwaza*.[47]

Like the dargahs of Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti in Ajmer and Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki in Delhi, that of Baba Farid also seems to have attracted non-Muslims to embrace Islam. It certainly played a rather more important part than the dargahs of his immediate predecessors in India. The popular legends incorporated in an early eighteenth century work, *Jawahir-i Faridi*, mention a number of Hindu castes, high as well as low, the members of which embraced Islam *en masse* at the hands of Baba Farid. How many castes became Muslims as a result of their association with the Shaikh in his lifetime

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Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya in Multan because it was built in the thirteenth century.

[46] Cf. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, March 1837, p. 192.

[47] K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakr* (Aligarh: Dept. of History, Univ. Press 1955), p. 124.

cannot be ascertained owing to the non-availability of authentic evidence, but it is certain that many did. The Khokkars (people of the martial Rajput race) in the region around Ajodhan were Hindus in the beginning of the fourteenth century, but later Muslims. Likewise, the Sial Rajputs who happened to be influential people in the north-western Punjab probably adopted the Islamic faith under the influence of the dargah. Unlike them the fishermen and other low-caste people may have been converted by the Shaikh himself, because certain privileges enjoyed by members of these castes at the dargah on the occasion of the '*urs* (death anniversary), point to their early association with the Shaikh and his dargah later on. 'The ceremonial distribution of *jilla* [small bread with *halwa* on it] refers to the occasion when the Jalhora, a caste of fishermen, had joined the discipleship of the saint. The *jilla* is prepared by the women of the Machchi caste.'[48]

As for the dargahs of the khalifas of Baba Farid, a few of them seem to have come into the limelight within a few decades of their passing away for the very reasons outlined earlier. Of them, the dargahs of Shaikh Jamaluddin in Hansi, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi, and Shaikh 'Ala'uddin Sabir in Kaliyar are worth mentioning. Shaikh Jamaluddin, a resident of Hansi (a city situated on the trade route, linking Multan with Delhi), was the most favoured disciple of Baba Farid. He died in his master's lifetime and was survived by an infant son, Burhanuddin. Baba Farid conferred the *khilafatnama* (permission to enrol murids or disciples in the silsila) just after his father's death. Burhanuddin's son, Shaikh Qutbuddin Munnawwar, whom Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya trained in esoteric as well as exoteric sciences, was also a devout Sufi. The dargah of Shaikh Jamaluddin and the khanqah of his son and grandson received people, dignitaries as well as commoners, in large numbers as long as Hansi served as the provincial headquaters.[49] In 1354 Sultan Firuz Shah founded the city of Hisar Firuza and also made it the provincial headquarters of the *shiqq* (extensive territorial unit) instead of Hansi.[50] Hansi then lost its importance and the

[48] Cf. *The Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakr*, p. 109, for details.

[49] *Siyar al-Auliya*, pp. 179, 183, 250–1; Shams Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1891), pp. 80, 81.

[50] Firuz Shah is reported to have requested Shaikh Nuruddin, the son and successor of Shaikh Qutbuddin Munawwar, to move to Hisar Firuza, but the

number of pilgrims to the dargah decreased as a consequence. In 1947 the town was deserted by its Muslim population; the Muslims were either massacred or fled to Pakistan, and as a consequence the dargah has ceased to be of even local importance. It is now taken care of by the Muslim Waqf Board.

The most important Chishti shrine in South Asia is the dargah of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. The transfer of the old population from Delhi to Deogiri (Daulatabad) by Muhammad-bin-Tughluq two years after the passing away of the Shaikh seems to have prevented this dargah from immediately becoming an important centre of pilgrimage, as was expected. When Ibn Battuta arrived in Delhi in 1333 he did not find it popular, although he states that the reigning sultan, Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, used to visit the Shaikh in his khanqah during his lifetime.[51] But it did not take long for this dargah to gain popularity. When other dargahs had lost their importance as a result of the transfer of old citizens to Deogiri during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, the dargahs of Nizamuddin Auliya and Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki were properly looked after by their devotees.[52] Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's successor, Firuz Shah (1351–88) paid frequent visits to it, and is also reported to have had the beautiful Jama'at Khanah mosque constructed for the convenience of pilgrims.[53]

Saiyid Muhammad Gesudaraz, a contemporary of Ibn Battuta, tells us that the old *dargahs* were totally abandoned after the old citizens of Delhi had moved to the south:

> In Delhi there were many places of pilgrimage but all of them lost their importance after Sultan Muhammad had ordered people to move to Daulatabad. All of them, with the exception of the *dargahs* of Shaikh-

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latter did not accede to his request and lived in his ancestral hometown. Ibid., pp. 132–3.

[51] *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. 3, p. 654.

[52] Muhammad Akbar Husain, *Jawami' al-Kilam* (Kanpur: AH *1356*), *p. 143.*

[53] The construction of the mosque is wrongly attributed to Prince Khizr Khan, son of Sultan 'Alauddin Khalji. Mir Khurd says that Shaikh Nizamuddin was buried in the wilderness, according to his will. Muhammad-bin-Tughluq ordered the construction of a tomb over his grave. Firuz Shah says that he had the mosque constructed. The author of 'Tarikh-i Muhammadi' also attributes its construction to Firuz Shah: *Siyar al-Auliya*, p. 154; *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi* (Aligarh, 1956), p. 14, 'Tarikh-i Muhammadi,' f. 146b.

ul-Islam Qutbuddin [Bakhtiyar Kaki], his holiness, Shaikh-ul-Islam Nizamuddin [Auliya], and a few others, located behind the *'idgah*, were deserted.[54]

The interest evinced by Firuz Shah in the beautification of the dargah leaves no doubt about its importance during the last years of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's reign. Firuz Shah paid frequent visits to it,[55] and in his *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi* says he had the doors and perforated curtains of sandalwood installed in the dargah, in addition to four chandeliers of gold suspended by gold chains, one for each corner of the apartment. The famous Jama'at Khanah mosque was built by his order.[56] Likewise, nobles and rich men seem to have raised buildings to provide rooms for Sufi saints all around the dargah, as the evidence available in the *diwan* of Muthar of Kara (a contemporary of Firuz Shah) reveals.[57] The large number of khalifas whom the Shaikh asked to settle in different provincial headquarters of the Delhi sultanate—from Bengal in the east to Daulatabad in the south and Sind in the west—further enhanced the influence of the silsila and the popularity of this dargah in Delhi.

Visitors who came from faraway places also went to the dargahs of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki and Baba Farid in Ajodhan. In fact, the fame and greatness of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya greatly contributed to the influence and popularity of the dargahs of his spiritual predecessors in the Chishti silsila. The relevant evidence contained in an early seventeenth century tazkira of the Sufis shows that visitors offered so much money at the dargah that the servitors lived in affluence.[58]

Another feature of the dargah of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya is the association of Muslim intellectuals and litterateurs with it from the very beginning. Many intellectuals of the late-thirteenth

[54] Syed Muhammad Akbar, *Jawami'Al-Kilam* (Collection of the Utterances of Shaikh Gesudaraz) (Kanpur, AH 1356), p. 143.

[55] Shams Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta, 1801), p. 194.

[56] Firuz *Shah*, *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi*, ed. Sh. Abdur Rashid (Aligarh, 1956), p. 14; Muhammad Bihamand Khan, 'Tarikh-i Muhammadi,' f. 145a. The compiler, a near contemporary, also states that the mosque was built by Firuz Shah.

[57] Diwan-i Muthar, Oriental College Magazine, (Lahore), (May, 1935), pp. 135–6.

[58] Muhammad Sadiq, 'Kalimat al-Sadiqin,' MS., no. 99, Library of the Department of History, AMU, Aligarh, f. 13a.

and early-fourteenth centuries were his murids, and sincerely believed they owed their success to his blessings. Amir Khusrau calls him the Christ of the age and the reviver of Islam.[59] Zia'uddin Barani compares him with Junaid and other early saints of Islam.[60] Afterwards, historians and writers continued to mention him in their writings with considerable respect and love.[61] The leading philosopher-poet of Islam in the modern age, Muhammad Iqbal, paid visits to his dargah, considering it a source of spiritual strength and inspiration.[62]

Unlike the dargahs mentioned above, the dargah of Shaikh Ala'uddin 'Ali Ahmad Sabir in Kaliyar (popularly called Kalyar Sharif, i.e. holy Kaliyar) took centuries to become popular. We do not find any reference to this dargah in any fourteenth-century work, though the spiritual successors, Shaikh Shamsuddin Turk of Panipat (the immediate khalifa) and Shaikh Jalaluddin Mahmud of Panipat (the khalifa of Shaikh Shamsuddin), seem to have been saints of eminence. The latter's successors, particularly Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq of Radauli (Barabanki district in UP) and Shaikh 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi (d. 1537), raised the Sabiri branch of the Chishti silsila to all-India status. Shaikh 'Abdul Quddus moved from Radauli to Shahabad in 1496, and finally settled down in Gangoh (Saharanpur district in UP).[63] Through his efforts the dargah of Kaliyar came into the limelight in the sixteenth century. He celebrated the 'urs of the Shaikh every year and the followers of the branch came from distant places to participate in the ceremony. Before 1947, his 'urs was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Though the number of pilgrims from Pakistan has considerably diminished, those from different parts of UP and other provinces in north India still turn up in large numbers. A city of tents arises, extending over miles, on the occasion of the 'urs. Shopkeepers also arrive on this occasion to sell their wares.

[59] Amir Khusrau, *Mathnavi Majnun Laila* (Aligarh: Institute Press, 1917), p. 13.

[60] *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, pp. 343–4.

[61] 'Isami, *Futuh al-Salatin*, ed. Usha (Madras: 1948), also Anonymous 'Sirat-i Firuz Shahi,' MS., Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.

[62] Iqbal says:

'The visit paid to your grave is the source of life for the soul'.

[63] Simon Digby, 'Abdul Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 A.D.): The personality and attitude of a Medieval Indian Sufi', *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, vol. 3, Aligarh: Dpt of History, Univ. Press, 1975), pp. (1–66) 4–9.

Of the dargahs of the khalifas of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, discussion may be limited to that of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi, by all standards a great Sufi saint distinguished for his austerity, renunciation and devotion. On the death of Shaikh Nasiruddin in 1356, Firuz Shah had a beautiful tomb raised over his grave, as the inscription tells us.[64] As in the case of other dargahs, popular legends grew inciting people to seek there an answer to their problems. The relevant evidence, contained in eighteenth-century sources, reveals that even the Mughal emperor Jahandar Shah (deposed and killed in 1713) took a bath along with his courtesan consort, Lal-Kunwar, in the spring tank adjacent to the shrine in order to get a male child.[65] The graphic description furnished by Durga Quli Khan during the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah is interesting, as it casts light on how popular it had become with the passage of time:

> The sacred dargah is located at a distance of 3 *kurhs* [six miles] from Shahjahanabad [Delhi]. This is as soul-ravishing as paradise; the atmosphere inside exudes spiritual fragrance. The area around it is ablaze like the sun owing to the blessed light from the [holy] grave. The blessed rays make the tomb shine like a chandelier. Needy people get relief while patients are cured through its blessing. The Shaikh [lying buried] is not the lamp of Delhi but of the entire country. People turn up there in crowds, particularly on Sunday. In the month of Diwali the entire population of Delhi visits it and stays in tents around the spring tank for days. They take baths to obtain cures from chronic diseases. Muslims and Hindus pay visits in the same spirit. From morning till evening, people come in groups and also busy themselves in merry-making in the shade of the trees. They are provided with an occasion of great merriment, the sound of music comes from every corner. The 'urs is also celebrated with great enthusiasm. Emperor Muhammad Shah has had a vast compound enclosed around the shrine and it is unique in size.[66]

As the annual 'urs celebrated at the dargahs of the Sufi saints were the most important event of the dargah, this gave impetus to

[64] See Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Athar al-Sanadid*, (Kanpur: Nami Press, 1904), p. 19, for Firuz Shah's inscription.

[65] Yahiya Khan, 'Tazkirat al-Muluk,' MS., India Office Library, Ethe no. 409, f. 119a.

[66] *Muraqqa'-i Delhi*, ed. Nurul Hasan Ansari (New Delhi: Univ. of Delhi, Urdu Dept., 1982), pp. 27–8.

trade and commerce. Artisans and traders waited for the occasion as pilgrims from far and near bought products as souvenirs. At every dargah certain special items associated with it were supplied on the occasion of the 'urs, and were bought by votaries for presentation to family members or friends, for they were believed to have been sanctified by the dargah. Abbé Carré's eyewitness account of the 'urs ceremony at the dargah of Saiyid Muhammad Gesudaraz at Gulbarga in Karnataka applies to every Chishti dargah. Writing some time after 1673 he says:

> I was surprised to find the road [to Gulbarga] full of procession of *fakirs* and Hindus. Most of the men had a sort of cradle on their heads, covered by little streamers of cocks' feathers, bells, and the like. The women and children all carried sticks which they lifted in the air, for the wind to turn whirligigs on them, made of cloth, in all sorts of colours. They also carried plates of copper, little pots and a sort of cauldron on which they beat, as on our Basque drums . . . This led me to enquire of a local Hindu who came to speak to me, what it all meant. 'Why, he replied, don't you know every year there is a pilgrimage there by a great number of people such as you have seen. They [the articles] are thus sanctified when they return home'. 'But', I said, 'what is meant by all those instruments and streamers paraded by them?' 'Those', he said, 'are souvenirs of their pilgrimage, which they keep all their lives, and which they regard with much confidence and devotion in any afflictions or maladies that befall them. They put their children, when sick, into those little cradles you saw, and are quite content, whether the child lives or dies, because the cradle had been in the saint's house and had been sanctified by him. . . . The copper pots and plates are for the food of anyone who is dangerously ill. . . .[67]

The account furnished by Durga Quli Khan of the 'urs at the dargah of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya is corroborative. He was amazed to see the huge crowd of people assembled on the occasion of the 'urs on the 14th Rabi' al-Thani. Master singers, shopkeepers and hawkers participated both in order to receive a blessing and make a profit. The vast land around the shrine was covered by the tents of rich people. There were also arranged avenues of glittering shops.[68] Evidence available in sources since the fourteenth century

[67] Abbé Carré, as cited by Richard Maxwell Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur (1300–1700): Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), p. 229.

[68] *Muraqqa'-i Delhi*, pp. 25–7.

also reveals that the urs provided rogues with an opportunity for merry-making and promiscuous enjoyment, but the majority of the participants consisted of people who had faith. Two of the sultans of Delhi, Firuz Shah and Sikandar Lodi, banned women from visiting the dargah in order to prevent anything but the expression of religious devotion.

All the early Chishti dargahs discussed above, with the exception of the Hansi dargah, still attract large numbers of visitors from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan on the occasion of the 'urs. Partition in 1947 caused the departure of Muslims in present-day Haryana, and since then the dargah of Shaikh Jamaluddin and his descendants has ceased to be a popular centre of pilgrimage. Today the dargahs of Mu'inuddin Chishti in Ajmer, Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi, 'Ali Sabir in Kaliyar and Baba Farid in Pakistan still retain their traditional cultural importance. As for the dargahs of Shaikh Bakhtiyar Kaki and Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh, they no longer attract large crowds even on the occasion of the 'urs, being located far from Muslim pockets in Delhi. Old Muslim residents who lived in quarters near these dargahs were either killed during the communal riots or fled to Pakistan. The 'urs celebrations still do infuse a religious spirit in people deepening and heightening religious feeling. Moreover, the popularity of Persian *ghazals* in medieval times and Urdu ghazals in our own age owes a great deal to these 'urs. *Qawwals* (singers) popularize ghazals thereby adding to the fame and popularity of the poets.

In Pakistan the administration of all the important dargahs has been taken over by the Islamic Waqf Board. The income from these dargahs is spent on works of public utility. In India only the dargahs of Ajmer and Kaliyar are managed by the Sunni Central Waqf Board. There is a constant flow of money to the dargah of Ajmer, the dargah of Shaikh Nizamuddin in Delhi, and the dargah of Shaikh Ali Sabir in Kaliyar. In short, these dargahs have lent colour and variety to the cultural heritage of South Asia.

The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi in Bahraich: Legend, Tradition and Reality*

TAHIR MAHMOOD

It is the month of May 1987. Braving the heat and *loo* of the day a serpentine queue of pilgrims—men, women and children, Muslims and non-Muslims, carrying multi-coloured flags and spears—is on its way to its far-off destination. Leading them there is a group of folk-singers loudly reciting to the beat of drums:

چلے غازی کی نگریا
اپنی زندگی بنانے، سوئی قسمت جگانے
سارے گناہ بخشوانے، جی کی بپتا سُنانے
چلے غازی کی نگریا

(To the city of the Ghazi have we set out—
to adorn our lives, to awaken our sleeping fate;
to tell him the tale of our woes, to procure forgiveness for all our sins—
have we set out to the city of the Ghazi)

Intermittently prostrating themselves and shouting 'Ghazi Miyan *madad*' (help), 'Bale Badshah *madad*,' they are heading for the city of Bahraich in the extreme east of the state of Uttar Pradesh,

* I am grateful to my brother, Professor Syed Khalid Mahmood of Tribhuvan University, Nepal, who supplied me with a lot of useful material relating to this essay.

where lies the legendary saint of their dreams, Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi who, they believe, has the miraculous power of giving them everything they cherish. Looking forward eagerly to the *ziyarat* or *darshan* of this holy grave, they are sustained on their journey.

Scenes of ritualistic travel by such pilgrims can be seen in the months of May and June every year on the outskirts of Bahraich. People come from all parts of the country and have been coming now for several centuries. The renowned Urdu poet of the nineteenth century Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810) must have watched a similar scene when he had said:

یوں چلی آنکھوں سے اشکِ خوں فشاں کی میدنی
جیسے بہرائچ چلے غازی میاں کی میدنی

[Of blood-tinted tears from my eyes there is such a flow as if Ghazi Miyan's pilgrim-party towards Bahraich did go.]

This is the devotional journey that Akbar had blessed on the banks of the Yamuna,[1] and the same that Sikandar Lodi and Aurangzeb unsuccessfully tried to stop, regarding it as repugnant to the traditions of orthodox Islam.[2]

Bahraich is situated at an equal distance of 128 kms by road from Lucknow and Faizabad in the district of Bahraich which stretches out to the Indo-Nepal border in eastern Uttar Pradesh.[3] It has been an important town of the former imperial territory of Oudh. On the outskirts of the town in the north there is the famous shrine of

[1] As stated in Abu'l Fazl's *Akbar Nama*, according to which Akbar had watched in disguise the scene of the departure of pilgrims from Agra to Bahraich. The *Akbar Nama* also gives some details of the shrine at Bahraich, as cited at length in *Hayat-i Mas'udi*. See Bibliography, p. 43.

[2] Sikandar Lodi's action is referred to in *Tarikh-i Farishta*, Tarikh-i Da'udi and *Zubdat al-Tawarikh*, as cited in *A'inah-i Mas'udi*, pp. 111–12. The action taken by Aurangzeb is referred to in most of Mas'ud Ghazi's biographies. See Bibliography, p. 43.

[3] The population of Bahraich town is over 100,000, while that of district Bahraich is over 2,000,000. The town has an old grand-mosque, said to have been constructed during the reign of Babur, a magnificent clock-tower of the British period, a famous Muslim seminary—the Jami'ah Mas'udia Nur al-'Ulum, and the river Saryu, said to be the same as is referred to in the Ramayana. The population is mixed, the Muslims having a numerical strength well above the national average. The Oudh-Muslim culture is dominant.

Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi, popularly known as the *dargah* (or *dargah sharif*).[4] The saint-martyr lying buried here is affectionately referred to by the people as 'Ghazi Miyan,' 'Bale Badshah'. Some of the epithets commonly used for him are Sayyid al-Shuhada' (Chieftain of the Martyrs), Aftab-i Shahadat (Sun of Martyrdom), Shahid-i Barhaq (Truthful Martyr), Salar-i A'zam (Great Leader) and Mujahid-i Hind (Crusader of India).[5] To his dargah pilgrims and visitors come from various parts of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and several other countries.

THE LEGEND OF THE GHAZI

Who was Ghazi Miyan? The answer to this question lies in legend, folk-tale, tradition and superstition. Most of what is now known about him has been handed down by his devotees, generation after generation, including the hereditary *khuddam* serving at the shrine and folk-singers venerating his spiritual powers. There are numerous biographical works giving an account of his life and deeds.[6] Coming from these various sources the story of Ghazi Miyan is, in a nutshell, as follows.

A descendant in the twelfth generation of Sayyidina 'Ali bin Abu Talib,[7] Ghazi Miyan was the nephew of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (d. 1030). His pedigree reads like this:

'Abd al-Muttalib (Prophet Muhammad's grandfather)
|
Abu Talib
|
'Ali
|
Muhammad Hanifah
|

[4] While the town is on the south of Bahraich railway station, the shrine lies on its north, at a distance of nearly two kms. In the old days the area was a village named Singha Parasi. Now it is included in the municipal limits of the city of Bahraich.

[5] Hereafter referred to as 'the Ghazi' or 'Ghazi Miyan'.

[6] See Bibliography, p. 43.

[7] Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law; father of the martyr of Karbala, Imam Hussain; fourth of the Righteous Caliphs (d. 673).

'Abd al-Mannan
|
Butl
|
Asif
|
'Umar
|
Muhammad
|
Tayyib
|
Tahir Ata-ullah
|
Salar Sahu
|
Salar Mas'ud

Bibi Satr Ma'la, the mother of the Ghazi, was the sister (or cousin) of the sultan. Her husband Salar Sahu was a commander in the army of Mahmud Ghaznavi. While he was on an expedition in Ajmer accompanied by his wife, Salar Mas'ud was born there in February 1015 (Rajab AH 405). At the age of four Mas'ud became a disciple of a great scholar of the time, Sayyid Ibrahim Bara Hazari, and completed studies of the highest level within the next five years or so. When his father moved to Kahilar he joined him there with his mother, exhibiting on the way his miraculous military skill. Thereafter he was summoned by Sultan Mahmud to Ghazni and later accompanied him in his conquest of Somnath.[8] The plunder at Somnath by Sultan Mahmud disillusioned the young prince, and on returning to Ghazni he decided to devote himself to the service of God and humanity. Sultan Mahmud's chief wazir, Hasan Memandi, became very jealous of the young, charming prince. Scared of his enmity, the sultan advised the prince to return to India and live with his parents at Kahilar. Resenting this and disgusted with the circumstances, the prince visited his parents at Kahilar and solicited their blessings to move forward in India to spread the message of the unity of God and human brotherhood. Shortly after that, accompanied by a huge army of devotees and

[8] One of the sons of Sultan Mahmud was also named Mas'ud. Our Salar Mas'ud was a different person, not to be mixed up with him.

admirers, the Ghazi reached Delhi and, rejecting the throne of Delhi offered to him after his conquest of the principality, proceeded further.[9] Passing through Meerut, Qannauj and Malihabad, the Ghazi arrived in the township of Satrikh, where he stayed for long with his father, who had in the meanwhile moved there. His beloved teacher Mir Ibrahim Bara Hazari was killed in a battle on his way to Satrikh,[10] and some time later his mother breathed her last at Kahilar.[11] These tragedies deeply saddened him, and to overcome his grief he proceeded to the thick forest on the outskirts of Bahraich town which, during those days, was a politically important region of India. While he was camping at Bahraich, Salar Sahu also died in Satrikh.[12] With this profound shock the Ghazi now decided to spend the rest of his life in the forest where he had been living, in peace and worship.

Ghazi Miyan began attracting large crowds and soon grew into a spiritual celebrity of the region around Bahraich. He tried to stop the practice of human sacrifice (*bali*) at the local temples, and to restrain despotic rulers from exploiting the people. All this made him a hero with the downtrodden. The growing popularity of the Ghazi alarmed the rulers of Bahraich town and its neighbourhood, and twenty-one of them united to challenge him under the leadership of Raja Sahar Dev, wanting him to go back to Ghazni. His plea that he had no worldly ambition and wanted to devote his life to the service of suffering humanity fell on deaf ears. He was dragged into the battlefield much against his will. After a series of wars Ghazi Miyan fell. He was killed on 14 June 1033 at the age of nineteen. Sikandar Diwana, Ghazi Miyan's bare-headed and bare-footed lieutenant who always voluntarily acted as his bodyguard, was killed while holding the dead body of the Ghazi in his arms. It was then guarded by his faithful horse and dog till it was buried under a *mahwa* tree (beneath which the Ghazi used to preach) by his close friend Mir Ibrahim, who was himself later killed by the enemy.

[9] Ghazi Miyan's chief of army Mir A'izzuddin was killed in the hostilities at Delhi and is buried there.

[10] Mir Ibrahim is buried at Riwari. Another saint of the same name buried at Jalesar was a different person.

[11] Her body was taken to Ghazni and buried there.

[12] His tomb in Satrikh (now in district Barabanki, UP) is now a popular centre of pilgrimage.

Ghazi Miyan's grave was guarded by his surviving devotees until two of his father's family servants came down from Satrikh to take charge of it. The local people began to venerate it, the Hindus being more zealous in their veneration than the Muslims. Years later a Hindu milkman, Jasu Ahir—whose barren wife was blessed with a son on praying there—re-built the grave with pure cow milk and costly lime. Soon thereafter the grave became an object of even deeper veneration. In the thirtieth year of the Ghazi's death Zahra Bibi, the congenitally blind daughter of one Sayyid Jamaluddin of Rudauli (now in District Barabanki, UP) who had regained her sight on praying to the Ghazi, became his staunch devotee and got his grave reconstructed under a magnificent tomb. Zahra Bibi spent the rest of her life near the tomb and remained unwedded. On her death the Bibi was buried in a grave near the Ghazi's tomb, which she had kept ready. As time passed the fame of the shrine and its spiritual potency spread.

Nasiruddin Mahmud—the son of Iltutmish—during his governorship of Bahraich (1245–6) added some new constructions around the tomb built by Zahra Bibi. He planned some of the architectural changes, but was in a dream warned against it by the Ghazi himself. By the time the Tughlaqs ascended the throne of Delhi Ghazi Miyan had become a legend and his grave the shrine of a miraculous saint. In 1341 Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq visited the grave, accompanied by the celebrated traveller Ibn Battuta, and paid his respects to the Ghazi.[13] In 1374, after the triumph of Thatta, Firuz Shah Tughlaq visited the tomb. By that time some people had begun doubting that Ghazi Miyan was actually buried in the place, but a renowned godman of the time, Mir Mah, led the emperor to the grave and confirmed that the Ghazi lay there.[14] 'That an Emperor like you and a poor man like me should be equally respectful to

[13] The entrance to the tomb was then very small, while there was a large crowd of pilgrims. Due to this the emperor could not enter the tomb. He had visited Bahraich from Bangar Ma'u after suppressing the revolt by 'Ainul Mulk. Barni's works on history and Ibn Battuta's account of his travels refer to Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq's visit.

[14] A descendant of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, Sayyid Afzaluddin Abu Ja'far Mir Mah lived in Bahraich town in the fourteenth century. He reportedly used to go to the dargah, walking on his toes in order to avoid the congested graves of innumerable martyrs situated all around the shrine. His own grave in the centre of Bahraich town now attracts large crowds of pilgrims.

the Ghazi is the greatest proof of his spiritual greatness,' Saiyyid Mir Mah told the sultan. At the behest of his mother—who, having seen a pilgrim-party leaving from Delhi for Bahraich and being told of the Ghazi's miraculous powers, had taken a vow to build a big dargah around the Ghazi's grave if her son won the battle of Thatta—the emperor built a marble fort around the tomb.[15]

This, in brief, is the ancient history of the Ghazi and of his mausoleum around which in the course of time has grown what is now called Dargah Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi. How much of this story is authentic is difficult to say. Some historians have questioned the tradition regarding Ghazi Miyan's period, suspecting that he might have lived much later than believed. The authenticity of his principal biography, *Mir'at-i Mas'udi*, has also been doubted by some critics.[16] However, though the folk-tale in Ghazi Miyan's story may not be fully authentic, his historicity cannot be dismissed. He has been mentioned by Ibn Battuta, Ziauddin Barni, and several other recognized historical personages.[17] Tributes have been paid to the Ghazi by many saints and Sufis of the past—including Shaikh Sharafuddin bin Yahya Maneri, Mir Sultan Dihlawi, Raji Sayyid Nur Manakpuri, Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawi, and many others.[18]

THE DARGAH COMPLEX

Dargah Sayyid Salar Mas'ud has an enormous complex of three different forts enveloping each other. The pivotal Sangi Qil'a is surrounded by the historical Qil'a-i Kalan, while around the latter has grown the huge outer complex of the dargah.

[15] Firuz Tughlaq's visit to the shrine is mentioned in the *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* by Barni.

[16] See Bibliography, p. 43. Among the noted historians who have disregarded Ghazi Miyan's story as told by the *Mir'at-i Mas'udi* are Professor Muhammad Salim of Lahore and Professor Nazim Siddiqui of Aligarh.

[17] Supra, notes 13, 15.

[18] Shaikh Sharafuddin often referred to the Ghazi in his prayer-meetings, as stated by some of his disciples in their description of the Shaikh. Mir Sultan of Delhi, as reported in the *Malfuzat-i Mir Sultan* by Shaikh Murtada, had a vision of the Ghazi treating a leper by caning him, following which he had visited the dargah at Bahraich. Raji Sayyid Nur is also said to have had a vision

The Sangi Qil'a: The beautiful Sangi Qil'a (stone-fort) is the original mausoleum. Measuring 20 × 25 × 2.5 metres, it has latticed walls and marble flooring of white and black square tiles. Inside this fort is the tomb housing Ghazi Miyan's grave, which has a huge pinnacled dome over it. The interior of the tomb is remarkable for its atmosphere of sanctity. Outside the tomb there is a verandah of about 6 × 4.5 metres, in which are buried Ghazi Miyan's *nishan bardar* (standard-bearer), some of his khuddam, the Asp-i Nili or Lilli Ghori (his horse) and the Sag-i Sangal (his dog). The main entrance to the tomb is also situated in this verandah. The rest of the Sangi Qil'a is an open courtyard with doors on three sides. The interior and exterior of the Sangi Qil'a are both architecturally attractive.

The Qil'a-i Kalan: The Sangi Qil'a is surrounded on all sides by the Qil'a-i Kalan (big fort), measuring nearly about 90 square metres and enclosed by 2 metre wide walls. The main entrance gate to the Qil'a-i Kalan is in its western wall. Known as the Na'l Darwaza, it has thousands of coins and big and small na'ls (horse-shoes) of gold, silver and other metals grafted into its wooden sides and doors. The ancient Na'l Darwaza is supported by a new 7.5 metre high outer gate. Other exits from the Qil'a-i Kalan are the two Nishan Darwazas, the Purbi Darwaza and the Khirki (small door). In the complex of the Qil'a-i Kalan, on the front side of the Sangi Qil'a, there is a mosque which is said to be of the period of Shah Jahan. In front of the mosque are buried, around an old tamarind tree, many of Ghazi Miyan's companions and servants—Rajjab Salar, Panch Pirs, Jhaunra and Bhaunra the wrestlers and Naina, the maid—the last inside a small room.[19] Near the graves of the Panch Pirs is Jhaunra-Bhaunra's *kundal* (a huge stone), said to be one of their exercise tools and now venerated for its antiquity. On one side of the Qil'a-i Kalan is a series of seven old rooms in some of which are preserved the great Ghazi's relics—including

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of the Ghazi in his own room after his wife was, on praying to the Ghazi, blessed with a son. Ashraf Jahangir Samnani of Kachhaucha used to visit the Ghazi's tomb with Sayyid Mir Mah, and 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi has mentioned the Ghazi in the *Khazinat al-Auliya*, vol. II, p. 217.

[19] These graves have no inscriptions on them. The Rajjab Salar buried here seems to be different from another commander of the Ghazi's army with the same name, said to be buried in Hatila Pir at a distance of two kilometres from the dargah on the Bahraich-Gonda road.

his dress (a *mirza'i* superscribed with the Quran that he was wearing when he fell to the assassin's arrow), his sword and a copy of the Holy Quran. On the other side of the Sangi Qil'a are buried in two separate tombs Zahra Bibi and some of her relatives. Nearby is the *Ganj-i Shahidan*, a covered well into which were lowered bodies of the Ghazi's followers killed in the battle which claimed his own life. In its vicinity are an ancient sandal tree and the grave of Sikandar Diwana[20] (also called Brahnah Baba), a bunch of big and small staffs always hanging over it.

The outer complex: The Qil'a-i Kalan is surrounded by the huge outer complex of the dargah that has come up in the course of time. The main entrance to the outer complex, the Zanjiri Darwaza, is almost 14 metres high and three metres wide. It has a roofed gate and large, heavy iron chains hanging across its sides. These are meant to allow entry into the complex only on foot. Outside the gate on both its sides are fixed in the ground old heavy cannons which were once upon a time ceremonially shot on festive occasions. On top of the Zanjiri Darwaza there is a Naqqar Khana where drums and the *shahna'i* are regularly played. Inside the outer complex, immediately on entering through the Zanjiri Darwaza, is a relic of the ancient times, the ba'oli, a large masonry well with winding steps down to the water, landing places and chambers in the surrounding wall. Nearby is the entrance to an old walled orchard called the Salar Bagh. Beyond the Na'l Darwaza is situated a mosque said to have been constructed to commemorate the visit to the dargah by Aurangzeb, who is reported to have visited the shrine accompanied by the famous divine of his time, Shaikh Sarmad.[21] The rest of the outer complex now houses administrative offices of the dargah, a hospital, a garden called Sayyid Bagh, a school, a library, a police post, a guest-house (Mihman Khana Mas'udia), and a Mahfil Khana (auditorium). The back entrance to the outer complex—Maka'i Darwaza—has numerous rest rooms on both sides, a waiting shed for pilgrims, and a tank surrounded by huts to be used by lepers.

Unlike the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi and Mu'inuddin Chishti at Ajmer, both of which unfortunately have a shabby appearance and unclean surroundings, Ghazi Miyan's dargah is

[20] See above, pp. 28–9.

[21] As stated in *Hayat-i Mas'udi*. See Bibliography, p. 43.

noticeably neat and clean. The approach road to the main gate is wide and there is no congestion caused by unplanned structures around it. Outside the dargah there are interesting sites and places all around—graves, gardens and ruins. On the main road leading to the dargah an old building called Qadam Rasul houses what are believed to be the hand and foot impressions of the Prophet of Islam, said to have been acquired during the reign of the Oudh Nawab Asif-ud-daulah (ruled 1775–97).[22] On another side of the complex, at a distance of nearly one kilometre, is the historical Anarkali lake which the Ghazi reportedly visited regularly. Outside the dargah, at various distances and in different parts of the town, are situated graves of many companions, disciples and devotees of the great Ghazi, including his two commanders (killed in a battle before him) Mir Nasrullah alias Burhwa Baba and Saifuddin Surkhru Salar, as well as his treasurer, Pir Khidr.[23] The tombs of Muslim divines of later periods, including Mir Mah,[24] 'Alam Shahid,[25] Ibrahim Shahid and Firoz Shahid—all devotees of the Ghazi—are also situated in different parts of the town.

FESTIVITIES AT THE DARGAH

Most days are busy at the dargah, but there is an unusual rush on the two 'Id days, on Yaum-i 'Ashurah in Muharram, on Shab-i Bara'at, and on the Fridays and Sundays of every week. There are

[22] It is said that this building was actually constructed for personal use by one of the local rulers of Bahraich under Nawab Asaf-ud-daulah (Bande 'Ali Khan or Mehdi Khan) without the nawab's permission. On coming to know of the nawab's objection he gave it away for the holy relics of the Prophet. Architecturally, however, the building does not seem to be for residential purposes. As regards the Prophet's hand and foot impressions housed in it, authenticity is doubted.

[23] Mir Nasrullah's tomb is in village Dikauli at a distance of fifteen kilometres, on the Bahraich-Bhinga road, while Surkhru Salar, killed before him, is buried about a mile away from the dargah, near the Bahraich-Nanpara railway line. Pir Khidr is buried in the orchard beyond Anarkali lake.

[24] Supra, note 14.

[25] 'Alam Shahid is buried in a mosque adjacent to the historical clock-tower, while the tomb of Ibrahim Shahid is situated on the southern end of the town. Firuz Shahid, the great-grandfather of Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dihlawi, is buried on the back of the old *'idgah*.

also three major periodical festivities—the 'Urs, the Basant Fair, and the Great Jeshth Fair.

The 'Urs: 'Urs, the death anniversary of the Ghazi, is celebrated every year on 12, 13 and 14 of Rajab (the seventh month of the Hijri calendar). On this occasion, popularly known as the Rajbi, *fatihah* is recited at the grave by the khuddam, the officials of the shrine and the visiting pilgrims. The main attraction of the occasion is the ceremony called *gagar*. In the old days this meant the ceremonial march of the khuddam to the grave, carrying on their heads in a big tray the holy relics of the Ghazi. Now the relics have been replaced with flowers and a *chadar*. The sacred dress of the Ghazi is now carried to the grave on the night of 14 Rajab, among the carriers being leading Muslim divines and god-men of the time visiting the dargah. *Qawwalis* and religious discourse by noted *qawwals* and ulama, and *na'tiya musha'iras* (poetic symposia in praise of the Prophet) are organized, all of which usually attract participants and listeners from all parts of the country.[26] The *'urs* is a Muslim dominated festivity, while the two *melas* enumerated below attract a conglomeration of pilgrims from all faiths.

Basant Fair: The one-day Basant Fair takes place on the 3rd of the month of Magh in the Hindi calendar. This occasion attracts a large number of pilgrims of various communities, mainly from Bahraich and the adjoining districts. Farmers dressed in their best yellow (indicating the colour synomynous with Basant) visit the shrine in groups with offerings comprising of green spikes of wheat, fruit, vegetables and flowers, and they mainly pray for their crops. Ghazi Miyan's standard is unfurled over the Na'l Darwaza. The Basant Fair is the harbinger of an ensuing occasion, much bigger in every respect; on this occasion are announced the exact dates of the forthcoming Great Fair (Jeshth Mela).

The Jeshth Fair: The Great Fair begins on the Sunday following the first Thursday of the month of Jeshṭh, and it continues for nearly twelve days. To this magnificent fair come pilgrims from far and near. Though almost all the states of India are represented among the pilgrims, huge groups come from north Indian towns—Allahabad, Banaras, Faizabad, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Sultanpur, Satrikh, and Rudauli—and most of them have on the mela complex camping

[26] I have personally had the privilege of conducting such *musha'irahs* at the dargah.

places reserved for them on a perpetual or long-term basis. Nearly half a million pilgrims attend the Great Fair. People come on foot and by various kinds of conveyances. Some of them come prostrating themselves all the way. Special trains and buses run to Bahraich from several towns of north India. The pilgrims camp in and around the dargah and a new township comes into existence for the duration of the fair. Huge shopping centres spring up on the mela complex, and traders do a roaring business. The origin of the main festivity and rituals now held during the Jeshth Mela is embedded in the story of the legendary Zahra Bibi.[27] After her death and burial at the shrine, her parents and other family members used to come from Rudauli every year in the fashion of a *barat* (marriage-party) and hold wedding rites for their deceased daughter, who was supposed to have been spiritually wedded to the Ghazi. To watch the ceremony huge crowds of people would assemble. Later this tradition was continued by the people of Rudauli and is, now, the main function at the Jeshth Mela. The groups of pilgrim-parties are still called *medni* or *barat* (marriage party). They bring *jahez* (bridal gifts) and offer these at the grave of the Ghazi and Zahra Bibi. The jahez (locally called *palang-pirhi*) include decorated beds, silver thrones, clothes with gold and silver embroidery, footwear, furniture, household goods, jewellery and cash.

The carrying and presentation of *nishans* or *'alams* (long spear-headed sticks covered with costly cloth and other decorative materials) is the main attraction of the Great Fair. Pilgrims seeking the Ghazi's blessing for the fulfilment of their desires touch with the nishans brought by them the dome of the Sangi Qil'a, taking a vow that if they achieve what they aspire for they will return to the shrine with nishans and further offerings. Many do come back during the next mela, and this goes on year after year. The origin of the nishans is traced to an incident: those poor people of the region whom the Ghazi had helped, on knowing of the local rulers' aggression against him, rushed with their flags and spears to fight by him. They were, however, late. Finding the Ghazi already slain and buried, they left flags and spears all around his grave. Since then nishans are carried to the shrine by devotees of the Ghazi.

Next in importance to the presentation of nishans is the ritual at the pinnacle of the Sangi Qil'a dome. With visible feelings of

[27] See above, p. 29.

devotion, pilgrims throw from outside the mausoleum money, gold and valuables, aiming at the pinnacle, believing that if the offering touches the pinnacle their cherished desires will be fulfilled. For those whose money etc. misses the pinnacle despite repeated attempts, the message is believed to be that they have to wait further for the Ghazi's blessings. During this ritual, which continues for the entire duration of the Fair, a lot of money and articles get collected in the net specially fixed for the purpose around the dome. The nishans and money etc. thrown at the pinnacle are regarded as *charhawa* (devotional offerings). Together with the money and valuables offered at the Ghazi's tomb and various graves in the complex, or put into the *golaks* (money-boxes) kept at various spots in the dargah, they constitute the major revenue of the shrine.

Inside the tomb housing the Ghazi's grave on all the walls are always found hanging written 'petitions' of pilgrims, stating their problems and soliciting his blessings. Those blessing-seekers who cannot come personally send their 'petitions' through friends, or even by post, and the khuddam hang them on the walls of the room. When the petition is answered—in the form of the problem being solved—it becomes obligatory for the petitioner to be present at the shrine at the next Jeshth Mela (or 'urs).

The engrafting of na'ls (horse-shoes) in the Na'l Darwaza, the main entrance to the Qil'a-i Kalan, is a privileged blessing that few pilgrims to the dargah can aspire towards. It means success—sure and certain—in the achievement of any lawful desire. The staffs at Sikandar Diwana's grave are considered sacred by some pilgrims.[28] They take them back and hang them on the entrance to their homes, believing that evil spirits will be thwarted and kept away. Anyone who takes away a staff makes special offerings and he, or another pilgrim, must replace the staff.

The ancient Sandal Tree inside the Qil'a-i Kalan[29] is a special attraction for pilgrims, particularly women. It is believed to help maidens get suitable grooms, help barren mothers beget a child, endow children with a bright future, and others with the fulfilment of all kinds of desires and ambitions. The blessing-seeker has to tie a piece of gold or silver wire, or a thread, on the tree. Parents seeking blessings for their children arrange their *mundan* (the

[28] See above, p. 28.
[29] See above, pp. 31–2.

customary shaving of the head) under this tree, preferably during the mela days. Another tree—a thousand year old *nim* that stands beyond the Purbi Darwaza of the Qil'a-i Kalan is also venerated, but not as much.

On Monday and Friday the grave of the Ghazi is uncovered and washed before the dawn prayer. The water used in the 'bath' of the grave (*ghusl*) flows through a channel down the sandal tree and gets collected in a *haud* (basin) specially constructed for this purpose. Pilgrims touch this water and wash their eyes with it with great devotion. During the Great Fair and the 'urs the ghusl is regarded as a great occasion and people try to witness the scene from as close as possible.

Visitors to the Great Fair as well as pilgrims also go to the tombs of Ghazi Miyan's two commanders, Mir Nasrullah and Surkhru Salar, and to a number of other ancient graves in the town and its vicinity. Several Sundays following the mela are celebrated as the *chauthis* (literally the fourth day, a common festivity after marriage) which continue to attract devotees and businessmen alike. Pilgrims religiously visit the dargah at every mela year after year, believing that an unjustified absence even once will entail Ghazi Miyan's displeasure, to express which he might employ jinns, evil spirits and thieves.[30]

THE MESSIAH OF LEPERS

The most remarkable miracle of Ghazi Miyan's dargah is said to be the recovery of lepers from their disease. The water used for the bath of Mazar Sharif is believed to be a cure. Pilgrims collect it in small bottles from the haud near the Sandal Tree and take it back home to treat with it patients of leprosy and leucoderma. Lepers themselves also visit the dargah in large numbers. Outside the east-north corner of the Qil'a-i Kalan there is a big haud connected through a long drain to the floor of the Mazar Sharif. During the Great Fair this haud, called Korhi Khanah (Leper House), is full

[30] A maid employed with me at Delhi in the 1960s used to visit the Great Fair at Bahraich every year. Once, due to my illness, she was not allowed to go, which she greatly resented. Some time later, she lost her box of clothes. Crying aloud, she told me that, annoyed by her absence at the fair that year, Ghazi Miyan had got her things pilfered.

with patients of leprosy—especially at the time of the bath of the grave—appealing to the Ghazi for the miraculous cure. On the bank of this haud there are huts where lepers can stay. Besides this haud, they occasionally sit also in the drain attached to the mosque inside the Qil'a-i Kalan, where the water used in wudu (ablution) gets collected. Year after year, lepers are reputedly cured in these places; many stay there with deep devotion for as long as they are not cured, or keep on periodically visiting the dargah, waiting to be picked by the great Ghazi for his blessings. It is believed that thousands of lepers have been cured at the shrine. The dargah office maintains registers to record the names and addresses of leprosy patients who get cured; and these registers are indeed full with countless entries.[31]

A leper who gets cured rushes to the Anarkali lake and takes there a holy dip. This means immediate thanksgiving to the Ghazi, with whom the ancient lake was a favourite summer resort. From the lake the leper, now cured, must go back home and revisit the shrine with enormous offerings during the next Great Fair.

Those reluctant to accept these curative powers believe that the water in the shrine has beneficent mineral properties. In the colonial period the water in the area was once chemically tested to ascertain the presence of minerals. The finding was reportedly negative.

DARGAH ADMINISTRATION

The holy grave of the Ghazi was taken into their protection and supervision by the khuddam (servants) of his family soon after it had come into existence. In the course of time developed a tradition of *khidmat* by hereditary servants at the dargah. For 850 years the dargah remained under the supervision of the khuddam. Even today there are khuddam at the shrine, and they take pride in being descendants of its ancient servants and protectors. Emperor Mu'inuddin Akbar II (r. 1788–1806) endowed the *zamindari* of village Singha Parasi—the site of the dargah—for the expenses of its administration (as stated in an inscription present in the dargah until the beginning of this century).[32] In 1763 Nawab Shuja'-ud-

[31] Entries from the registers with full details are regularly published in the periodical literature relating to the dargah.

[32] This was inscribed in Persian on a copper tablet.

daulah (r. 1754–75) of Oudh had by a *farman* issued to the then Governor of Bahraich endowed the income of the Great Fair for the administrative expenses of the dargah, including the salaries of the khuddam (this was stated in another inscription now extinct).[33] In the course of time, thus, the dargah had become a waqf under Islamic law. Until the end of the nineteenth century the khuddam had a strong hold on the dargah.

At the turn of the century a representative managing committee was constituted for the dargah by the collector of Bahraich, drawing its members from the élite and the Muslims on the local self-governing bodies. The khuddam, too, had their nominees on this committee. Unhappy with the development, the khuddam went into litigation, which continued for long. The committee, however, remained in power and framed bye-laws for the administration of the dargah which were judicially approved under the Code of Civil Procedure.[34] After the enactment of the UP Muslim Waqf Act of 1936 the Sunni Central Board of Waqfs at Lucknow claimed jurisdiction over the dargah.

In the middle of the eighteenth century Aurangzeb reportedly made an unsuccessful attempt to stop the 'unIslamic' practices which he had seen at the dargah.[35] What Aurangzeb failed to achieve was reattempted in the middle of the twentieth century by a leading personality of the town.[36] In 1942 the managing committee of the dargah 'was suspended by an order of the local civil court which appointed a receiver with wide administrative and financial powers for the shrine. This was the late Sayyid Mahmud Hasan (1903–75), a leading lawyer of the town and an acclaimed expert on religion and theology.[37] A disciple of Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi,[38] Sayyid

[33] A hand-written copy of this document is preserved in the dargah.

[34] See Bibliography, p. 43.

[35] For a long time during the middle of the century a noted Shah family of the town was closely connected with the administration of the shrine—the most well-known member of this family being the late Khwaja Khalil Ahmad Shah (d. 1960).

[36] Historical details are briefly provided on pp. 28–30.

[37] My father; author of *Qur'an-i Karim ki Basic Reader* (Lucknow: 1980). He died after performing Hajj at Mecca in December 1975 and is buried at the historic Jannat al-Ma'la.

[38] Well-known Deobandi divine of the Khanqah-i Imdadiya, Thana Bhawan, District Saharanpur, UP.; author of numerous religious books, including *Tafsir Bayan al-Qur'an*, and the famous work for women, the *Behishti Zewar*.

Sahib was a puritanical Muslim and had the reputation of being a '*wahhabi*.'[39] Soon after taking charge of the shrine as its receiver, he abruptly stopped by order the practice of prostration at the Ghazi's grave. This caused great resentment among the khuddam and pilgrims alike. The order was challenged in court, where it was vehemently defended by the late Sayyid Sahib, who used for it all his legal acumen and religious learning. On behalf of those who insisted on the validity of the practice of prostration, some leading ulama of the time appeared in court as witnesses, including Maulana Shahid Fakhiri of Da'irah, Shah Ajmal of Allahabad, and Baba Khalil Das Chaturvedi of Benaras.[40] The story of the stringent theological cross-examination to which these learned divines were subjected by Sayyid Sahib in the court is still narrated by senior citizens of Bahraich. Refusing to interfere with the religious beliefs of the people the court, however, quashed the order prohibiting the practice of prostration. Disgusted with this, Sayyid Sahib quit after serving the dargah as receiver for four years, and the old committee was back in power.

In September 1958 a new managing committee was constituted by the late Justice Ni'matullah,[41] then Chairman of the UP Waqf Board, this time with the former receiver of 1942 as president of the committee. The conflict between the diehard unIslamic practices established at the dargah and the religious beliefs of the president and most of the other members co-opted by him created lots of problems for the committee. Against heavy odds it functioned for about two years and then had to give way to the traditionalists. Later the UP Waqf Board took over the management of the dargah and appointed a number of administrators one after another, but with no authority to interfere with the dargah prac-

[39] Literally, followers of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab of Hijaz (1703–92); in India this epithet is used for staunch believers in puritanical Islam.

[40] Both these ulama were intimately connected with the dargah festivities. A leader of the Jamiatul Ulama-i Hind, Fakhiri Sahib used to perform the gagar ceremony during the 'urs. Baba Khalil Das of Banaras was a scholar of the holy Vedas and a devotee of the Ghazi. Among the Deobandi ulama who in my memory regularly visited the dargah were Manazir Ahsan Gilani, Azad Subhani, Qari Muhammad Taiyib, Abul Shahjahanpuri and Qasim Shahjahanpuri.

[41] Former Judge, High Court of Allahabad.

tices. Until today the shrine is managed by an administrator on behalf of the UP Waqf Board,[42] while litigation is pending in the High Court of Allahabad seeking restoration of a democratic administration by a representative committee.

The dargah has a huge income out of its properties and from pilgrims' offerings made during the festivities and otherwise. Its present annual income is over Rs 1.2 million. The dargah gives a grant to a college in Bahraich town (named after Maulana Abul Kalam Azad), maintains or supports half a dozen schools in the district, and contributes to the expenses of two seminaries of the town called the small and the big *takya*. It arranges funerals for unclaimed dead bodies, distributes quilts to the poor at the beginning of every winter, awards annuities to widows and scholarships to students, and gives six per cent of its income to the UP Waqf Board as required by the Waqf Act of 1954. There are people who regard the income of the dargah, and therefore any help coming from its funds—as unIslamic since its source, the offerings at the grave, is clearly repugnant to Islamic teachings.

By any standard the dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi is, in terms of its income, potential and significance, no less important than the shrine of Khwajah Mu'inuddin Chishti of Ajmer, which has since long been governed by a central statute (at present the Dargah Khwajah Sahib Act of 1955). Many feel that the shrine at Bahraich, too, merits suitable state legislation for the proper and fruitful utilization of its resources.

THE LEGEND OF THE GHAZI OUTSIDE BAHRAICH

The legend of Ghazi Miyan is not confined to the city of Bahraich. In many other towns of northern India there are places related to his name. In Meerut a memorial to the Ghazi was reportedly built long ago by Qutubuddin Aibak, where Bale Miyan's *Nauchandi* is celebrated even now with great enthusiasm, attracting huge crowds from the town and neighbourhood. Near Sambhal in District Moradabad a Neze ka Mela (Fair of Spears) has been taking place since ancient times in memory of the Ghazi who, reportedly,

[42] The first among them, the late Rafiq Ahmad was, and the second, Abul Hasan 'Usmani is, closely related to me.

passed through the place on his way to Satrikh. In Ginnaur is buried his companion, Tajuddin Turk. In village Lakhanpur near Budaun a place of worship is related to the Ghazi's arrival there during his travels in northern India; here an annual mela takes place coinciding with the Great Fair at Bahraich. The grave of Ghazi Miyan's father, Salar Sahu, at Satrikh is a popular pilgrim centre. Besides the existence of the graves of those related to the Ghazi or those of his companions who had died and were buried locally during his long march from Ghazni to Bahraich via Multan, Delhi and Meerut, another reason is mentioned in books for the growth of places and festivities related with him. It is said that when in mid eighteenth century Aurangzeb closed the dargah in order to put an end to the unIslamic practices of prostration and other forms of veneration, the general public that firmly believed in grave-worship greatly resented his action.[43] Unable to challenge or undo this, people in various regions who had been traditionally going to the Great Fair at Bahraich erected in their own towns and villages memorials to the Ghazi and began holding annual fairs there, coinciding with the dates of the Jeshth Mela of Bahraich. These local fairs continue to be held until now and their sites are still venerated.

CONCLUSION

The *dafali* (drum-beater) has been an important character in Ghazi Miyan's story. On the beat of the *daf* (drum) these folksingers have, for ages and in various parts of the country, been narrating in prose and poetry the legend of the Ghazi, his *karamat* (spiritual powers) and *mu'jizas* (miracles). Poems in Urdu, Hindi and local dialects have been composed and sung since long. Since 1937 lyrics of Akbar Warthi of Meerut (Urdu translator of the *Mir'at-i Mas'udi*) in praise of the Ghazi, which also depict his life and spiritual powers, have been very popular with the dafalis. Known for his antagonism for the great Sir Sayyid (1817–98), Akbar Alahabadi (1846–1921) once sarcastically recited:

غازی میاں کا حال دفالی سے پوچھیے
سیّد کی سرگزشت کو حالی سے پوچھیے

[43] See above, p. 25.

[Just as the story of Ghazi Miyan is narrated by the *dafali*; that of Sir Sayyid is narrated by Hali]

The couplet indicates the depth of the dafali's devotion for the Ghazi as well as his role as a propagandist. His description of the great Ghazi is indeed as authentic as the story of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, as told by the renowned poet-philosopher Khwajah Altaf Hussain Hali (1837–1914).

One of the major concerns of the Prophet of Islam undoubtedly was the eradication of superstition from human society. The last words which he spoke just before his death in 632 were: 'O my people beware! After my death do not turn my grave into a place of worship; people before you turned the graves of their prophets into places of worship and were doomed.' It is an irony of history that today the veneration of graves and superstitions relating to the tombs of saints are common in the Muslim world, especially in the Indian subcontinent, where the local ethos supports it. The story of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi and his grave narrated herein represents this socio-religious trend. People in this part of the world seem to believe more firmly in the great Ghazi and his miraculous powers than in their Prophet and his authentic teachings.

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A Note on the Dargah of Salar Mas'ud in Bahraich in the Light of the Standard Historical Sources

IQTIDAR HUSAIN SIDDIQUI

The personality of Salar Mas'ud, who lies buried in Bahraich, is surrounded by legends that seem to have expanded over the centuries. It is generally held that he was a descendant of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (d. AD 1030) through his daughter, that he married a pious Sayyid and entered India along with a band of warriors for the propagation of Islam by waging *jihad* against the non-Muslim rulers. He is said to have conquered the entire region upto Bahraich, where he met a martyr's death.

But the body of evidence contained in the standard contemporary sources goes contrary to these legends. Muslim invaders never seem to have crossed the river Ghogra before the establishment of the Turkish Sultanate in the beginning of the thirteenth century. One of the emigrant Persian writers in the Sultanate of Delhi, Sadiduddin Muhammad 'Aufi (d. 1232), a refugee from Bukhara, tells us that Malik Baha'uddin al-Jamji's first military expedition of Bahraich defeated its *ra'i* (ruler) and that the expedition returned loaded with booty. Al-Jamji had joined the service of Qutbuddin Aibak (r. 1206–10), and after his death transferred his allegiance to Iltutmish (r. 1210–36).[1] The relevant evidence, available both in the *qasida* composed by Siraj-i Khurasani in praise of the eldest son of Iltutmish, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1230), and in the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, reveals that the territorial units of Awadh and Bahraich were finally subjugated by Nasiruddin Mahmud after

[1] Sadiduddin Muhammad 'Awfi, *Lubab al-Albad*, vol. 2, ed. E. C. Browne and Mirza Muhammad Qazvini (London: Luzac and Co., 1906), pp. 113–15.

1220.[2] Since then both the territories remained well-controlled parts of the Delhi Sultanate.

The references contained in Minhaj al-Juzjani's account of the immediate successors of Iltutmish tend to show that the Muslims had settled in Bahraich in sizeable numbers during the reign of Iltutmish. According to custom, the ulama and *masha'ikh* (Sufi saints) must also have been encouraged by the state or by nobles to settle down there in order to cater to the religious needs of the local Muslim population. For instance, during the reign of Sultan Ala'uddin Mas'ud Shah (r. 1242–6), the youngest son of Iltutmish (also named Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah) was sent to Bahraich as its governor. His appointment, according to Minhaj, ushered in an era of socio-economic development in the reign. The new governor is also said to have suppressed recalcitrant elements in the territory.[3]

None of the thirteenth-century writers mentioned above make mention of the martyred warrior Salar Mas'ud of Bahraich. It is Amir Khusrau who seems to have been the first Indo-Persian writer to refer to his tomb in Bahraich. He stayed in Awadh under Khan-i Jahan Halim Khan, the governor during the reign of Sultan Mu'izzud-din Khaiqubad (r. 1287–90), and wrote in a letter to a friend in Delhi: In the town of Bahraich, the fragrant tomb of Sipahsalar Shahid [the martyred Sipahsalar] scents the entire Hindustan[4] with the perfume of odorous wood.'[5] This reference to the tomb made by Khusrau leaves no doubt that Salar Mas'ud did actually exist. It also suggests that he met a martyr's death some time during the early decades of the thirteenth century, for he finds mention in all the standard fourteenth-century histories.

Zia'uddin Barani's reference to Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's visit to the tomb in Bahraich in 1341, after his victory over the rebel governor of Zafarabad (District Jaunpur), tends to suggest that by this time it had become a popular pilgrimage centre in north India.[6] Ibn Battuta, who had accompanied the sultan to Bahraich, provides

[2] Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, vol.1, ed. 'Abdul Hai Habibi (Kabul: Historical Society of Afghanistan, 1963), p. 453.

[3] Ibid., pp. 470, 478, 487, 490.

[4] The early Indo-Persian writers refer to the modern region of eastern UP by the name of Hindustan. In Khusrau's letter 'Hindustan' certainly means eastern UP.

[5] Amir Khusrau, *I'jaz-i Khusravi*, vol. 2 (Lucknow: Newal Kishore Press, 1867), p.155.

[6] With the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, sultans began to pay visits to

us with an insight into the growth of popular traditions at the dargah of the martyred warrior. In Bahraich the Arab traveller heard people tell strange stories about his achievements: that he conquered the entire region, destroyed enemies of the faith and spread Islam there. Ibn Battuta found a large number of people who depended on the dargah for their livelihood.[7]

The historical works produced in India during the latter half of the fourteenth century also yield some useful information about the dargah in Bahraich. Shams Siraj 'Arif describes the visit to it by Firuz Shah in 1373–4, showing that no sultan could avoid Bahraich if he ever happened to be in the region.[8] The relevant evidence, contained in the official work of the reign, *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi*, helps us in tracing the history of a living tradition at the dargah. Today, patients suffering from leprosy come from far-off places to visit the dargah and believe they will be cured through the blessing of Salar Mas'ud. The anonymous compiler of the *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi* tells us that Haji Ilyas, the sultan of Bengal, suffered from leprosy and proceeded towards Bahraich to be cured of his ailment. Soon after, his visit to Bahraich was the cause of Firuz Shah's invasion of Bengal for he had entered the Sultanate of Delhi without seeking permission from its Sultan.[9]

Likewise, Shaikh Rizqullah Mushtaqi states that Sikandar Lodi banned the annual procession in which people took out flags and spears in memory of Salar Mas'ud throughout the Sultanate. The occasion seems to have provided people with the opportunity for promiscuity.[10] The relevant evidence in the *Akbar-Nama* reveals that people proceeded in crowds from different parts to Bahraich

the popular *dargahs* and distributed money among the servitors and others attached to it. Barani, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862), p. 491.

[7] Ibn Battuta, *'Aja'ib al-Afsar*, vol. 2, Urdu transl. by Maulvi Muhammad Husain, (rpt: Islamabad: National Institute for Historical and Cultural Research, 1983), p. 190.

[8] Shams Siraj 'Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1890), pp. 372–3.

[9] Anonymous, *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi*, MS., Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, ff.15a, 17b.

[10] Rizqullah Mushtaqi, *Waqi'at-i Mushtaqi*, MS., British Library, London, no. Add. 11633, f.8a; 'Abdullah, *Tarikh-i Da'udi* (Aligarh: AMU Publication Division, 1969), p. 38.

to participate in the '*urs* or *mela* held in May-June every year.[11]

It is also worth noting that in the sixteenth century the Muslim élite had doubts about the authenticity of tales relating the descent and achievements of the martyred warrior. The celebrated historian Mulla 'Abdul Qadir Bada'uni provides these details on an educated Sufi saint, Shaikhul Hidaya of Khairabad (Sitapur District in UP): 'One day Muhammad Husain Khan [Bada'uni's own patron] asked the Shaikh, "What sort of a man was Salar Mas'ud, whom the common people of India worship?" The Shaikh replied: He was an Afghan who met his death by martyrdom.'[12]

The seventeenth-century hagiographer Shaikh 'Abdur Rahman Chishti, in an attempt to remove doubts about Salar Mas'ud from the minds of the Muslim élite, compiled his famous work *Mir'at-i Mas'udi*. In this work he not only incorporated popular tradition but also whatever he found in spurious works, the authorship of which was ascribed to the contemporaries of Salar Mas'ud. Himself a devout Sufi who had faith in the miraculous powers possessed by saints, both dead and alive, he could not be expected to evaluate the authenticity of his sources. In medieval India works on the lives of popular Sufi saints were fabricated at the instance of book-sellers because such books fetched a good price, the book trade being quite lucrative.

In the final analysis it can be said that Salar Mas'ud was a military adventurer either from Central Asia or from the region of modern Afghanistan who left behind memories of bravery and piety. His legend expanded with the passage of time and Hindus and Muslims began visiting his grave in increasing numbers. The role played by his dargah in bringing Hindus and Muslims closer has been quite important. Commoners belonging to the two major communities still worship at his grave and make offerings in cash and kind. The annual income from these offerings amounts to more than Rs. 1,20,000. This is spent on the maintenance of the dargah and on educational institutions which provide religious instruction to children of the lower strata of the Muslim community. As Salar Mas'ud is believed to have passed away a bachelor, there is nobody to claim descent. There is thus no *sajjada-nashin* of the dargah. The Sunni Central Waqf Board of UP manages its affairs.

[11] Abul Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Bapt. Mission Press, 1894), p. 145.

[12] *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, vol. 3, Engl. transl. Wolseley Haig, (rpt: Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1973), pp. 46–7.

Mughal Documents Relating to the Dargah of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti

S. A. I. TIRMIZI

The *dargah* of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti at Ajmer has attracted people from near and far, mostly irrespective of caste or creed.[1] The devotion it has commanded over the centuries is reflected in the records that have come down. These records can be divided into three categories: (1) Epigraphical records inscribed on buildings;[2] (2) Visitors' Registers maintained with great secrecy by the *khadims/mujawirs* or attendants of the shrine; (3) Documents relating to the shrine.[3] The last are in Persian and those dating from 1540–1627 constitute the subject matter of this article.

II

It was during the influx of Muslims from Central Asia and Persia to India that Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti came to India, probably before the Turkish conquest, and chose Ajmer as the centre of his peaceful activities.[4] Believing as he did that private property was a serious impediment to the growth of a spiritual personality, he neither owned a house nor possessed sufficient cloth to cover his body. Identifying himself with the local people, he wrapped him-

[1] Dargah is a compound Persian word meaning 'place of a door'. In Iran it is generally used for royal court or palace but in India it has acquired a special connotation and means the tomb or the shrine of a saint.

[2] These have been edited, translated and published. For details see S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through Inscriptions* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, 1968).

[3] These have been published in the original with a commentary in Urdu. For details see 'Abdul Bari Ma'ani, *Asanid al-Sanadid* (Ajmer, 1952).

[4] Mir Khurd, *Siyar al-Auliya* (Delhi, AH 1302), p. 46.

self in a patched *do-tahi* (two-plied cloth).[5] According to him, the highest form of devotion meant helping the poor, the distressed and the downtrodden.[6] He preached and practised the gospel of universal love and the brotherhood of man. He loved the lowly and the lost, and made friends of the outcaste. He was a man of wide sympathies, catholic outlook and deep humanism. His pantheistic approach brought him close to Upanishadic thought and struck a congenial cord among Hindus. He is reported to have married the daughter of a local Hindu raja.[7]

His piety and humanism attracted a band of followers round him and he founded the Chishti *silsila*, which flourished because it produced respected spiritualists and propounded catholic doctrines. It attracted Hindus without demanding conversion to Islam, and taught *dhikr* (the remembrance of God) without asking for an initiation into the Sufi fold. This sympathetic attitude enhanced the effectiveness of their spiritual mission and augmented the prestige of their *khanqah* (hospice) which was accessible to one and all.[8] While the *masjid* and the *madrasa* respectively provided the external and intellectual facade of Islam, the khanqah sustained its internal structure.

III

When Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti passed away in 1235 at Ajmer, his *khalifas* or spiritual successors carried on his mission and his tomb soon came to be frequented by devotees who subscribed to the doctrines he preached during his lifetime. Although the tomb was not pukka in the beginning, it was visited, among others, by Muhammad-bin-Tughluq when he marched against Ajmer.[9] Similarly when Zafar Khan, the Tughluq governor of Gujarat, led an expedition against Ajmer in 1396, he visited the tomb of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti.[10] When Mahmud Khalji (1436–69) of Malwa conquered Ajmer in 1455, he visited the tomb and built a mosque adjacent to it.[11]

[5] Ibid., p. 7.
[6] Ibid., p. 45.
[7] 'Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, (Delhi, AH 1309), pp. 112–13.
[8] *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, III, p. 429.
[9] 'Isami, *Futuh al-Salatin*, ed. A. S. Usha (Madras, 1948), p. 466.
[10] Sikandar, *Mir'at-i Sikandari*, ed. S. C. Misra and M. L. Rahman, (Baroda, 1961), p. 18.
[11] Firishta, *Tarikh-i Firishta*, vol. 2 (Bombay, 1832), p. 715.

The present structure of the shrine is reported to have been built by Ghiyasuddin Khalji of Malwa, and the construction of the Buland Darwaza is ascribed to one of the sultans of Malwa.[12] It is, however, certain that the cupola of the shrine was embellished in 1532, as is indicated in the chronogram inscribed in golden letters on the interior of the northern wall of the shrine. Mu'azzam, the chronogrammist, may be identical with Khwaja Mu'azzam, the uncle of Akbar who used to compose verses.[13]

A vivid picture of the shrine as it appeared at that time has been painted by William Finch. 'Before you come to this tomb,' he observes,

> You pass three faire courts of which the first contayneth neere an acre of ground, paved all with black and white marble, wherein are interned many of 'Mahomets cursed kindered'; on the left is a faire tanke inclosed with stone. The second court is paved like the former, but richer, twice as bigs as the Exchange in London; in the midest whereof hangs curious candlesticks with many lights. Into the third you pass by a brazen gate curiously wrought, it is the fairest of the three, especially, near the doore of the sepulchre, where the pavement is curiously interlaid; the door is large and inlayed with mother of pearls and the pavement about the tombe of interlaid marble—the sepulchre very curiously wrought in work of mother of pearle and gold with an apitaph in the Persian Tongue.[14]

Akbar made Ajmer the base of his operations against Mewar. Soon after conquering Chittor in 1567, he travelled the distance from Agra to Ajmer on foot to visit the shrine in fulfilment of the vow he had taken before launching the Mewar campaign.[15] He presented a 'brazen cauldron' to the shrine on this occasion.[16] Two years later, on the birth of Prince Salim, Akbar again made his famous pilgrimage on foot; this made a deep impression on people and is referred to by most contemporary historians. In 1569 Akbar

[12] 'Abdul Haqq, p. 178.

[13] Tirmizi, p. 16.

[14] William Finch in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. 4 (Glasgow, 1905), p. 61.

[15] 'Abdul Qadir Bada'uni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1865), pp. 102–5; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1935), p. 220, Abul Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, vol. 2, transl. H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1912), p. 476.

[16] 'Abdul Qadir Bada'uni, vol. 2, p. 105.

issued orders for the erection of mosques and khanqahs at Ajmer.[17] In the absence of any epigraphical evidence, it would not be wrong to conjecture that the construction of the red sandstone mosque, now known as Akbari Masjid, might have commenced about this time. Akbar was blessed with a third son at Ajmer on 2 Jumada I, 979 (9 September 1572). This prince was named Daniyal, as he was born in the house of Shaikh Daniyal, then one of the attendants of the shrine.[18] From 1570 to 1580 Akbar visited the shrine almost every year, but after 1580 he never went to Ajmer.

Jahangir made Ajmer the base of his operations against Mewar. One of his nobles, Mir Shamani, constructed the gateway to the north of the shrine in 1612.[19] In the following year Jahangir presented a large cauldron to the shrine, when he sent Prince Khurram against Mewar. The emperor ordered food to be cooked in this pot and 5000 persons who had assembled at the shrine ate their fill.[20]

Soon after ascending the throne Shah Jahan, like his father and grandfather, went to the shrine on foot and ordered the construction of a mosque in 1628 in fulfilment of a vow which he had made at the time of the Mewar campaign.[21] The elegant marble mosque, to the west of the shrine, took almost a decade to be completed.[22] Shah Jahan visited the shrine on 25 Zulhijj 27 *julus* (27 October 1654) and distributed Rs 10,000. He also gave some money to Shaikh 'Ala'uddin *sajjada-nashin* (*locum tenens*) of the shrine.[23] In AH 1064 (1655) he built what is now known as the Shah Jahani gateway as a memorial to the successful outcome of the campaigns led against Rana Raj Singh of Mewar.[24] Thereafter he and his daughter Jahanara repeatedly visited the shrine.

Immediately after gaining victory over his elder brother at Deorai

[17] Abul Fazl, vol. 2, p. 511.

[18] 'Abdul Qadir Bada'uni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, vol. 1, transl. Low (Calcutta, 1924), pp. 143–4.

[19] Tirmizi, pp. 31–2.

[20] Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, vol. 1, transl. Rogers and Beveridge (London, 1909), pp. 269–70.

[21] 'Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshah-Nama*, vol. 1, pt 1 (Calcutta, 1886), p. 273.

[22] Tirmizi, pp. 44–9.

[23] Muhammad Waris, 'Padshah-Nama,' MS., Raghubir Library, Sitamau I, fol. 736.

[24] Tirmizi, p. 51.

in 1659 Aurangzeb visited the shrine.[25] Two decades later he made Ajmer the base of his operations against Marwar and Mewar. On 16 September 1679 he sent from Ajmer a strong force to foil the attempts of Durgadas.[26] In the following year Aurangzeb again came to Ajmer after scoring a victory over the Rana of Udaipur and visited the shrine.[27]

Bahadur Shah I, son and successor of Aurangzeb, visited Ajmer in AH 710 and presented Ajit Singh and Jai Singh with robes of honour.[28] Subsequently, when Ajit Singh seized Ajmer, Muhammad Shah invaded Taragarh, which fell in 1720 after a short siege.[29]

IV

The repeated imperial visits and the devotion of dignitaries resulted not only in the transformation of the complex of the shrine but also in the creation of a considerable number of documents, some of which have escaped the ravages of time and are found in the private custody of the khadims. Some idea of their nature and contents can be had from their text, calendared hereunder.

AKBAR

1. *Parwana* (noble's order), dated 12 Jumada 967 (February 1560), issued over the seals of Sayyid 'Alam Husaini[30] and Sayyid Ikrami Mubarak, confirming 20 *bighas* of land along with 2 wells in the *qasba*[31] *of Ajmer in favour of Shaikh Qutban*, khadim of the shrine as heretofore.[32]

[25] Muhammad Kazim, *'Alamgir-Nama* (Calcutta, 1868), p. 330.

[26] Saqi Musta'idd Khan, *Ma'asir-i 'Alamgiri*, transl. J. N. Sarkar (Calcutta, 1947), p. 111.

[27] Ibid., p. 118.

[28] W. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar, 1922), p. 73.

[29] Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'asir al-Umara*, vol. III (Calcutta, 1891), pp. 757–8.

[30] Sayyid 'Alam was the son of Mahmud Husaini, who seems to be identical with Sayyid Mahmud Barha (Shah Nawaz Khan). *Ma'asir al-Umara*, vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1890), p. 409.

[31] A qasba used to be a synonym of *pargana*, which, under the Mughals, was a subdivision of *sarkar*.

[32] Ma'ani, p. 11.

2. *Farman* (royal order) dated Sha'ban 967 (April-May 1560) to the officials of Ajmer intimating that the office of *tauliyat* (trusteeship) has been conferred upon Shaikh Husain, sajjada-nashin of the shrine, who shall look after the *langar* (public kitchen) and distribute the income therefrom among his brother, mother and the attendants of the shrine.[33]

3. Farman dated 982 (1574–5) to the officials of pargana Sambhar[34] confirming 'Alam in the office of *roshnai-i chiragh* (lighting the lamp) as heretofore, and ordering them to supply one *man*[35] of oil to the aforesaid person for lighting the lamp at the shrine.[36]

4. Farman dated 983 (1575–6) to the officials on pargana haveli Ajmer intimating that Sayyid Fathullah has been assigned the same duties which he used to perform heretofore at the shrine.

5. Farman dated 29 Safar 984 (28 May 1576) to the officials of pargana haveli Ajmer intimating that *mauza* (village) Nandila has been granted to Shaikh Fathullah and his brothers by way of *madad-i ma'ash* (subsistence allowance) as heretofore to meet the expenses of the *'urs* (death anniversary) of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti.

6. Parwana dated 8 Shawwal 988 (16 November 1580), issued under the seal of Imaduddin Ilahi, intimating that Shaikh Hashim, son of late Shaikh Fathullah, *mujawir* (attendant) of the shrine, complained to Akbar that mujawir Mansur had picked a quarrel about the division of *nudhurat* (offerings). Akbar, therefore, ordered that the complaint of the said mujawir be looked into and the division of nudhurat be effected in such a way that there be no more room for any dispute in this regard in future.

7. *'Ahd-nama* or agreement dated Rajab 992 (June-July 1584), made among mujawirs of the shrine, duly confirmed at the 'Adalat-i Aliya (Supreme Court) at Fatehpur Sikri under the seal of Tajuddin al-Husaini, regarding division of nudhurat, including *gul* (flowers) and post (covering) as heretofore.

8. Parwana dated 1 Jumada 995 (29 April 1587) issued under

[33] Bashiruddin Ahmad, *Faramin-i Salatin* (Delhi: Delhi Printing Works, 1920), pp. 2–3.

[34] A town, and one of the parganas of *sarkar* Ajmer. *Ajmer District Gazetteer* (Alwar, 1966), pp. 58–9.

[35] Unit of weight. In Akbar's time one *man* was equal to about 51.63 lbs.

[36] Ma'ani, pp. 3–5. The source books for all the subsequent documents cited are Ma'ani, *passim*, and Bashiruddin Ahmad, *passim*.

the seal of 'Imadul Mulk to Farid Nagori and Manohar, *qanungo*, stating that 240 bighas and 4 *biswas* of land located in mauza Nandila, pargana haveli Ajmer has been assigned to Shaikh Isma'il, mujawir, as his share, and ordering the addressees to demarcate and consolidate the land in the presence of Taj Muhammad and his brother Abda, and hand over the same to the assignee so that he may cultivate the land and enjoy the produce thereof.

9. *Bai'nama* (sale-deed) dated 8 Rajab 997 (5 January 1589), under the seal of Mufti 'Abdur Rahim, executed by Imam 'Ali, *musammat* (lady) Begi Sultan and musammat Shamso respectively, son, daughter and widow of the late Mir Darwesh Muhammad, *tarbuz-farosh* (watermelon seller), in respect of a haveli (mansion) consisting of a *riwaq* (portico) with two terraced *kothris* (apartments), four houses, of which two are covered.

10. Parwana dated Rabi II 998 (6 February 1590), executed under the seal of 'Imadul Mulk granting *wazifa* (cash allowance) at the rate of 2 *tankai muradi* (copper coin) per diem per head in favour of 'Abdul Da'im and 'Abdul Khaliq, sons of the late Shaikh Isma'il, mujawir, who are engaged in the study of *'ulum-i din* (religious sciences), out of the wazifa fixed for 'Abdus Sattar, *hafiz* (one who has learned the Quran by heart), who has left for his heavenly abode.

11. Bai'nama dated 12 Ramazan 1000 (12 June 1592), executed under the seal of Mufti 'Abdur Rahim, to the effect that the five sons of the late Muhammad and their widowed mother have sold two *koluposh* houses located in Jhalra, for a consideration of Rs 11 to Shaikh Chandan, mujawir of the shrine, in the presence of a number of persons.

12. Undated *hiba-nama* (gift-deed) executed over the seal of Sayyid 'Abdur Rahim to the effect that a haveli made of stone and consisting of a walled house, *suffa* (portico), etc., located in the city of Ajmer, has been gifted to Taj Muhammad, mujawir of the shrine, who has been handed over possession thereof.[45]

JAHANGIR

13. Farman dated 4 Shahriwar 5 Julus (17 August 1610), addressed to the officials of pargana haveli Ajmer informing them that 4200 bighas of land under cultivation and 2690 bighas of fallow land,

located in mauza Nandila, have been confirmed in the name of Shaikh Hashim, son of Shaikh Fathullah, Shaikh Isma'il, son of Taj Muhammad, and other 24 mujawirs as heretofore and adding that out of the said grant 1000 bighas of land has been earmarked to meet the expenses on 'urs and the remaining 5890 bighas are reserved as madad-i ma'ash for the 26 grantees.

14. Parwana dated 4 Ramazan 1020 (30 October 1611), issued under illegible seal confirming grant of 140 bighas of land as madad-i ma'ash in favour of Shaikh Chandan, khadim of the shrine, as heretofore.

15. Parwana dated 14 Zilhijja 1020 (7 February 1612), directing the *mutasaddis* (officials) of the shrine to ensure that Shaikh Hashim, along with his sons and Shaikh Isma'il, along with his brothers, draw half a *man* of grain from the langar and one seer of oil for lighting the lamp every day without any objection and obstruction.

16. Farman dated 24 Azar 7 Ilahi (5 December 1612), addressed to the officials of pargana Ajmer intimating that the tauliyat of the shrine has been conferred upon Shaikh Husain, descendant of the saint, and instructing them to pay his share in the *roshnai* and *'urs*.

17. Farman dated 27 Ardibahisht 9 Ilahi (6 May 1614), instructing the officials of pargana Ajmer to demarcate and consolidate 46 bighas of land, located outside the Osari Gate of the city of Ajmer, which has been assigned to Sayyid Khubullah, Sayyid Karamullah and other beneficiaries.

18. Farman dated 5 Aban 9 Ilahi (18 October 1614), ordering distribution of nudhurat deposited in the *qindil* (chandelier) into six shares as follows:

Sons of Mas'ud	1½ share
Sons of Bahlol	2 share
Sons of Ibrahim	½ share
Sons of Thaka	2 shares
Total	6 shares

It also states that the *nazr* made at the time of *sartarashi* [the *mundan* ceremony] will be enjoyed exclusively by the children of Mas'ud as usual.

19. Parwana dated 1 Dai 9 Ilahi (12 December 1614), under the seal of I'timaduddaula instructing the mutasaddis of the shrine not

to disturb Maulana Ibrahim Sanduqi and his son, Hafiz Isma'il, in the possession of a *hujra* (room) so as to enable them to recite the holy Quran daily in the morning at the shrine as heretofore.

20. Farman dated 10 Amardad 11 Ilahi (22 July 1616), addressed to the officials of sarkar Ajmer instructing them not to harass Shaikh Farid, mujawir of the shrine and his son, who have been assigned 300 bighas of land as madad-i ma'ash out of 560 bighas of land held by them heretofore in the villages assigned to the shrine.

21. Farman dated 28 Mihr 11 Ilahi (10 October 1616), addressed to the officials of sarkar Ajmer, instructing them not to harass Shaikh Ahmad and his brothers who have been allotted 400 bighas of land as madad-i ma'ash in the villages assigned to the shrine.

22. Farman dated 10 Aszar 11 Ilahi (21 November 1616), addressed to the officials of sarkar Ajmer, asking them to demarcate and consolidate 130 bighas of land assigned to Musammat Bibi Jan and others as madad-i ma'ash in the villages allotted to the shrine.

23. Farman dated 3 Amardad 12 Ilahi (15 July 1617), intimating the officials of sarkar Ajmer that 30 bighas of land located in mauza Kaiter[37] has been assigned to Ajmeri, Bazaid *Kalawant* (a musician) and their mother as madad-i ma'ash, in addition to *rozina* (daily allowance) of 2 seers of grain per diem.

24. Parwana dated 1 Shahriwar 12 Ilahi (14 August 1617), instructing the officials of the shrine to continue to pay 'Inayatullah and Akram 'Ali, sons of the late 'Abdur Rahman who died of a thunderbolt, in compliance with the farman of the emperor.

25. Farman dated 17 Bahman 12 Ilahi (26 January 1618) addressed to the officials of sarkar Ajmer, stating that three villages comprising 27,910 bighas of land had been granted as madad-i ma'ash to Shaikh Kamal and other mujawirs, numbering 229 as per the division made by Hasan Beg.[38] Yet, when the emperor visited Ajmer, only 198 mujawirs holding 25,450 bighas of land waited on him. Thereupon the emperor ordered that the mujawirs who waited on him should be handed over half of the land granted to them, but those who did not turn up should be deprived of the grant.

26. Farman dated 28 Bahman 12 Ilahi (2 February 1618), to the

[37] This seems to be identical with Kotra, a village in Ajmer district (Census Report, 1961), p. 243.

[38] He seems to be identical with Hasan Bagh Badakhshi 'Umari, who was done to death in AH 1015 (1605). See Shah Nawaz Khan, I, pp. 565–8.

same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Sayyid Firuz.

27. Farman dated 4 Ardibahisht 13 Ilahi (14 April 1618), to the same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Shaikh 'Ali.

28. Farman dated 16 Mihr 13 Ilahi (29 September 1618), addressed to the officials of sarkar Ajmer stating that six villages comprising 45,700 bighas of land yielding an annual income of Rs 9050, and assigned as bequest (*waqf*) to the shrine, had been divided into three shares. The first share was reserved for 'urs and roshnai. The second share was earmarked for the maintenance of Shaikh Husain, a descendant of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, and the third share was meant for *fuqara* (religious mendicants) and *takiadars* (dervishes). Those grantees who waited on the emperor when he visited Ajmer were allowed to retain half of their respective grant but grants of those who did not turn up were discontinued.

29. Farman dated 4 Ardibahisht 14 Ilahi (14 April 1619), intimating officials of sarkar Ajmer that 200 bighas of fallow land in mauza Bir has been granted to Sayyid Mansur, mujawir of the shrine, who also held 500 bighas of land as madad-i ma'ash.

30. Farman dated 27 Ardibahisht 14 Julus (7 May1619), to the same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Sayyid Matha.

31. Farman dated 3 Dai 14 Ilahi (14 December 1619), to the same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Sayyid Isma'il.

32. Farman dated 6 Dai 14 Ilahi (17 December 1619) to the same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Bahlol.

33. Parwana dated 14 Ilahi (1619–20), executed under the seal of I'timaduddaula, instructing the officials of sarkar Ajmer to demarcate and consolidate 160 bighas of land granted as madad-i ma'ash to Sayyid Mahmud and the brothers of Sayyid Chand.

34. Farman dated 4 Ardibahisht 15 Ilahi (23 April 1620), to the same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Sayyid Habibullah.

35. Farman dated 4 Ardibahisht 15 Ilahi (23 April 1620), intimating the officials of sarkar Ajmer that 100 bighas of land has been added to 406 bighas of land already held by Sayyid Shah Muhammad, mujawir of the shrine, as madad-i ma'ash.

36. Farman dated 4 Ardibahisht 15 Ilahi (23 April 1620), to the

same effect as on. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as Sayyid 'Abdul Jalil.

37. Farman dated 12 Khurdad 15 Ilahi (22 May 1620), intimating the officials of pargana Ajmer that Sayyid Hashim and his sons are entitled to half the share out of the six shares of the nudhurat made at the shrine.

38. Farman dated 12 Khurdad 15 Ilahi (31 July 1620), to the same effect as no. 25 above, but mentioning the name of the grantee as 'Abdus Shakur.

39. Parwana dated 10 Rabi II 1033 (21 January 1624), issued under the seal of Muhammad Murad, intimating the officials of Ajmer that Musammat Fatima, widow of Shaikh Qutb, was granted two *asar* (seers) of grain per diem from the *langar-khana* of the shrine, but that on her death her sons have been granted one asar of grain per diem for their maintenance.

40. Parwana dated 7 Rabi I 1035 (27 November 1625), under the seal of Fazil Khan,[39] instructing the officials of Ajmer not to harass Sayyid Hashim, who has been granted 1796 bighas of land in mauza Nandila by virtue of the imperial farman.

41. Farman dated 15 Shahriwar 22 julus (28 August 1627), addressed to the officials of sarkar Ajmer intimating that the mauza Gilota pargana Nirania, sarkar Ajmer, yielding *jama'* (assessed revenue) of Rs 750 has been granted to one Husain, as madad-i ma'ash.

V

From what has been stated above certain conclusions can be drawn. First, the shrine of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti was visited by the sultans of Delhi, as also by those of some of the local dynasties, long before Akbar made it popular by his famous march on foot from Agra to Ajmer. Second, the shrine of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, as also its attendants, were recipients of madad-i ma'ash grants long before the Mughal conquest of Ajmer, as is evident from some of the early documents of the reign of Akbar. Third, the following offices and institutions were connected with the shrine and maintained by the Mughal emperors through munificent grants:

[39] He seems to be identical with Agha Afzal Khan, who got a *mansab* and the title of Fazl Khan. Shah Nawaz Khan, III, pp. 12–18.

Offices: (a) khadim/mujawir (attendant of the shrine); (b) tauliyat (trusteeship); (c) sajjada-nashin *(locum tenens)*; (d) roshnai-i chiragh (lighting of chandelier at the shrine); (e) hafiz (reciter of the holy Quran); (f) kalawant (musician who played music at the shrine).

Institutions: (a) 'urs (death anniversary) celebrations of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti. In order to meet the expenses on this account, as many as 1000 bighas of land was assigned to the shrine by Jahangir; (b) langar, or public kitchen, open to all. Faqirs (religious mendicants) and takiadars (dervishes), widows and orphans, particularly benefited from it; (c) nudhurat or offerings, including gul (flowers) and *post* (covers) made by visitors to the shrine. Such offerings were generally deposited in the *qindil* (chandelier). The distribution was occasionally a bone of contention among khadims/mujawirs (attendants); (d) sartarashi or mundan which connotes the head shaving ceremony performed on children of Hindus and Muslims alike; (e) waqf (bequest) made to the shrine; these sometimes included as many as six villages comprising 45,700 bighas of land. The income was meant to meet expenses on 'urs, roshnai, maintenance of sajjada-nashin, charities to destitutes and dervishes. Fourth, wazifa or daily allowance was given to the needy who included orphans, widows and those who studied 'ulum-i din (religious sciences) at the shrine. Fifth, the madad-i ma'ash and wazifa beneficiaries who were required to pray for the prosperity and perpetuation of the empire, were indeed the apologists and propagandists of the empire and belonged to what Jahangir euphemistically called *lashkar-i du'a* or the Army of Prayers so astutely maintained by the Mughal emperors of India.

Rituals and Customary Practices at the Dargah of Ajmer

SYED LIYAQAT HUSSAIN MOINI

Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti settled at Ajmer before the establishment of Muslim rule in India.[1] He preached the gospel of Islam with remarkable devotion, establishing the Chishti order under challenging circumstances. He transformed the moral standards and pattern of religious behaviour among Muslims and affected the outlook of non-Muslims with regard to basic concepts of the Islamic faith.[2] His shrine has assumed an important position in the religious annals of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent and emerged as a great centre of spiritual activity for all seekers after truth.

The early chronicles as well as the hagiographical writings are wanting in details pertaining to the origin and evolution of numerous rituals and ceremonies performed at the shrine. However, they do tell us that it attracted a large number of devotees, including the rulers of Delhi, Mandu and Gujarat, prominent saints of various orders from different areas, and, furthermore, that it was looked after and guided by a permanent group of priestly attendants (*mujawirs* or *khadims*) in their performance of *ziyarat*.[3]

[1] Mir Khurd, *Siyar al-Auliya* (Delhi, AH 1302), p. 45.

[2] 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlavi, *Akhbar al-Akhyar* (Delhi: Muhammadi Press, 1865–6), pp. 26–7. K. A. Nizami, *Tarikh-i Masha'ikh-i Chisht* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyyat-i Dilli 1980), pp. 199–200.

[3] For details, see my article, 'A Critical Analysis of Akbar's Relations with the Dargah of Khwaja Sahib', in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (1981). Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, Mahmud Khilji of Malwa, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and Sher Shah Suri were among the rulers who visited the shrine in the pre-Mughal period. Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar, Jalaluddin Bukhari Jahan-gasht, Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, and Shaikh Shahul Hamid of Nagore

It is because of their relationship with Khwaja Sahib and their association with the shrine since its inception, as well as in view of their regular performance of the religious functions, that the khadims were generally respected, offered cash and granted land as *nazar*, not only by rulers and saints but also by the masses, including non-Muslims. This has been noticed by Shaikh Jamali (a famous Suhrawardi saint-cum-poet) during his visit to the shrine in the closing years of the fifteenth century.[4]

It appears that the khadims laid down certain rules and regulations, based on sufi tradition and custom, to maintain discipline and orderliness among visitors, particularly during the performance of the annual ceremonies. This unwritten code of behaviour prescribed for a devotee or a casual visitor concerned in the beginning the manner and style of performing rites, making prayers and reciting the *fatiha* within the tomb of Khwaja Sahib. Later, under the pervasive influence of the Mughal rulers, a new system of ceremonial rules and practices was established which assumed the definite form and pattern of a well-organized institution, linked administratively and financially with the imperial government at Delhi.

The various customs and ceremonies that developed under the patronage and control of the Mughals, Rajputs and Marathas generated an atmosphere of mutual understanding among different sections of society and gave stimulus to the growth of cultural affinity and a spirit of cordiality between Hindus and Muslims of the subcontinent. For instance, the system of *kalid-bardari* (key keeping) of the shrine is based on the *haft chauki* (seven groups or troops) arrangement of the Mughals.[5] The setting of the *qawwali*

(Tamil Nadu), who visited the shrine of Khwaja Sahib during the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, represented various orders of Sufis in India.

Shaikh Kamaluddin Husain, popularly known as Shaikh Husain Nagori, Shaikh Ahmad Majid Shaibani, Shaikh Ahmad Khattu, and Shaikh Hamza Dharsavi were among those prominent saints of different orders who spent considerable time in meditation at the shrine and who were interested in the development of the shrine during the pre-Mughal era.

[4] Shaikh Jamali, *Siyar al-Arifin* (Delhi, AH 1311), p. 16. Shaikh Fazlullah Hamid-bin-Jamali visited Ajmer in the closing years of the fifteenth century. He was influenced and impressed by the behaviour and saint-like qualities of Maulana Mas'ud, who was one of the *mujawirs* (*khadims*) of the shrine.

[5] 'Abdul Bari Ma'ani (ed.), *Asanid al-Sanadid* (Ajmer, 1952), pp. 210–14.

mahfils during the '*urs* days, and on every Thursday night, the use of *dal-badal* (special tent) over the heads of dignitaries, the services of *mashalchis* (torch-bearers), *chobdars* (macebearers), still dressed in typical Mughal costumes (with gold and silver chobs in their hands during these mahfils) is directly borrowed from the court etiquette of the Mughals. The frequent use of the terms and words in the daily working or routine of the shrine, namely *toshak-khana* (store-room), *nima* (for inner cloth-sheet), *ghulam-gardish* (covered passage for attendants), *chanwar* and *farrashas* (cleaners of sweepers made of the peacock feathers) and *bangla* (tying of floral net around *mazar*) indicate how deep-rooted was the Mughal cultural influence over the affairs of the shrine.[6]

The system of cooking food in a big cauldron (*deg*) was first introduced by Akbar. Since then a large quantity of food of different kinds has always been cooked in degs at night, and is distributed among the people after *fajar* (morning prayers).[7]

Tomes Coryat, who visited Ajmer, at the time of Jahangir, says that the Mughal emperor once ordered the preparation of *khichri* in the deg to be distributed among 5000 people, taking out the first on a platter with his own hands, followed by the queen, Noor

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A Shahjahani document, dated 1627, relates to the service (*khidmat*) of the shrine and the shares of offerings (*nazar*) on week-days. It is still preserved in the *qadim* (old) toshak-khana (store room) of the shrine. According to this, all the male members of the then khadim community were divided into seven groups, each comprising twenty-seven members. Each group had assigned to it a day a week for serving (khidmat) at the tomb and for collecting shares of nazars offered by pilgrims.

Haft-chauki, according to J. N. Sarkar, were those nobles who used to conduct the patrolling around the palace of the Mughal emperor, on each day of the week. J. N. Sarkar, *A Short History of Aurangzeb's Reign* (Calcutta, 1954), Index.

[6] For details of these ceremonies see Dargah-Files (total 800), Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. Mirza 'Abdul Qadir Baig, '*Uhda-i Tauliyat*, (Ajmer, 1944).

[7] S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through the Inscriptions*, (Delhi: Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, 1968), p. 17. For further evidence, which suggests that Rajput and Maratha chiefs also performed the cooking of *deg* with the food of their choice, see Anon., 'Waqa'i Sarkar-i Ajmer' (transcript MS., Azad Library, Aligarh), p. 292; T. D. Broughton, *Letters from a Mahratta Camp* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 237–8; *Asanid al-Sanadid*, pp. 275–6.

Mahal, and the other ladies of the harem.[8] Once, Shahjahan mixed the meat of a *nilgai* (white antelope) in the preparation of deg, which he had killed during a hunting expedition. In the second half of the eighteenth century, when Ajmer came under the control of the Marathas and Rajputs, a new kind of food known as *kesaria-bhat* (saffron sweet rice) was cooked in these *degs* and that has continued to this day.[9]

The appointment of non-Muslims to the important posts of *mutawwalli* (custodian) and *amin* (revenue officers), etc., their participation in the ceremonies at the shrine in an official capacity, the grant of stipends and daily allowances to Hindus—including *zunnardars* (Hindu priest), *bairagis* (Hindu *faqirs*) and the fixation of their shares in the daily *langar* (free food)—reflected the increasing presence of non-Muslims in the internal management of the dargah. But this development did not cause any tension or discord, and the atmosphere has remained as serene as it was before this significant development.[10]

Undoubtedly, the khadims, who have been attached to the shrine since its inception, played a key role in the smooth functioning and in keeping strict discipline in the performances of these rituals and ceremonies. As a result, they often invited the ill-will and wrath of pilgrims and officials. But their genuine concern and enforcement of established customs and rituals, showing strict adherence to the humanitarian approach of the saint, was always upheld by the authorities. For instance, in 1822, when 'Abdul Qadir Khan, *sarishtadar* (registrar) of Ajmer and *amin* of the dargah, burnt some of the old costly velvet *ghilafs* (cloth sheets) of the shrine to extract silver from them (in order to use the silver for the construction of

[8] Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. III (Glassgow, 1905), p. 491. Coryat further says that Jahangir and Noor Mahal lit candles at the shrine. Jahangir himself says that when he recovered from illness at Ajmer he wore ear-rings and cut his forelocks to fulfil a vow to Khwaja Sahib. See *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, trans. Rogers & Beveridge (Delhi, 1978), pp. 267–8. Cf. also an article in *The Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* (Varanasi) vol. XLI (1979), pt II, pp. 103–15.

[9] Salih Kamboh, '*Amal-i Salih*, Urdu transl. (Lahore, 1960), vol. III, p. 191; *Asanid al-Sanadid*, pp. 275–6.

[10] Dargah file, nos. 579/B, 738, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. '*Uhda-i Tauliyat*, pp. 53–4, 58 (document no. 22).

a permanent *mahfil-khana* or audition hall, he was stoutly opposed by a group of khadims and, as a result of this opposition, dismissed from the post of amin.[11] It was also probably on the report of khadims that, during the reign of Akbar, Shaikh Hussain Ajmeri was dismissed from the post of mutawalli as it was found that he misappropriated the funds of the shrine and had falsely upheld the claim of his descent from Khwaja Sahib.[12] Even until recently the approval and consent of these khadims was considered necessary whenever an appointment to any of these important offices was made.[13] Thus it is quite clear that the khadims were the backbone of these traditional practices and customs at the dargah.

The customs and practices now observed at the shrine may broadly be divided into two main categories: Rituals which are regularly performed on ordinary days, and ceremonies which are performed exclusively at the annual 'urs ceremony. The first category may be further divided into three parts: (a) daily rituals; (b) ceremonies of the week-end; (c) monthly functions.

DAILY RITUALS

Three important rites are regularly performed every day per schedule: (i) *Khidmat* (service routine) twice a day; (ii) *Roshni* (lighting ceremony); (iii) *Karka* (closing of the main doors of the shrine).

Khidmat literally means service, which is the exclusive privilege of the khadims.[14] First, in the morning a little before dawn, the key keeper (*baridar*) of the day appears and unlocks the silver-plated eastern gate of the main tomb. One of the elderly khadims recites *azan* (call for prayer), performs *taslim* and *salam*, and, followed by some of the khadims, enters the shrine and re-closes the doors

[11] Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani (MS., Azad Library, Aligarh), pp. 238–9, 255.

[12] Abul Fazl, *Akbar-nama*, vol. II (Calcutta, 1939), p. 80. For details of this case see Aminuddin Khan Maftun, *Kitab al-Tahqiq* (Ajmer, 1944); and Hafiz Muhammad Husain, *Tahqiqat-i Aulad-i Khwaja* (Agra, 1886).

[13] Report of A. Qadir, amin of dargah, dt. 28.9.1819; Letters of Mr F. Wilder, the first English Superintendent of Ajmer, dt. 5.10.1819; Dargah File, no. 9-B-1, Rajashtan State Archives, Bikaner.

[14] For details of khidmat see Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, p. 225a, Dargah Files, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

from inside. Some more candles are lit within the dome, and one of the pious and elderly khadims, obviously allowed by the baridar, moves closer to the inner circle of the tomb, softly removes the well-knitted floral garland called *sej* from the *mazar* (tomb), and puts it in a large basket covered with cloth (*jhab*). This is carried by another khadim to the nearby tomb of Bibi Hafiz Sahib, where this sej is placed on her tomb after it is cleaned. Then two or three khadims move to the inner railings of Khwaja Sahib's tomb and, after raising the ghilaf and *nimat* (cloth sheets) from all sides, put these on the stone structure over the grave (*ta'widh*). Then they start sweeping flowers from both sides towards the food-end of the grave, where some of the waiting khadims collect these flowers in huge jhabs, and carry them out into a courtyard to be assembled there. From there other khadims take these flowers and distribute them among pilgrims and devotees. In between the sweeping of flowers from the tomb, some of the khadims standing outside the inner railings, assisted by long-handle *chanwars* and *farrashas*, thoroughly clean the tomb from all sides, leaving nothing on the lower circle. Then, led by the same elderly khadim, they all recite the fatiha, pray, invoke the blessings of the Almighty in the name of the great saint, and place the cloth-sheet in the usual manner. Then they put upon it a fresh floral sej and sprinkle rosewater (*'atar*). At the same time, one of the khadims cleans the floor of the shrine, starting from the toshak-khana and ending at the foot of the shrine. When this service of cleaning the shrine from the inside is over, the doors are opened. It should be noted that during the course of this khidmat no one except khadims of the shrine are allowed to enter inside the tomb precincts.

At about 3 p.m. the doors of the tomb are again closed for the noon khidmat, and almost the whole process described above is repeated. It is on this occasion that some male pilgrims are allowed to observe the performance of service as silent spectators. The upper part of the grave is pasted with sandal, and, if needed, the cloth sheets of the tomb are changed. The change in the duty of baridar for the next twenty-four hours also takes place after this khidmat. The whole process ends in half an hour.

In the period between the two services pilgrims gather inside the tomb to pay homage to the saint, pray and recite the fatiha, offer flowers and cloth sheets, and invoke the blessings of the Almighty and Khwaja Sahib. They are generally guided in their rituals by khadims who also recite the fatiha, pray for them, place a portion

of the cloth sheet on the head of the visitors and extend a helping hand in the offering of flowers. Not all the visitors give cash offerings (nazar) to these khadims for this guidance, nor does every khadim insist on such payment. However, some of the khadims sit at the doorstep of the tomb in the hope of cash offerings from pilgrims.[15]

Roshni literally means light, and refers to the ceremony of illuminating the main inner chamber of the tomb at dusk with elaborate arrangements and a well-defined procedure.[16] This is one of the oldest ceremonies; it is held daily in the evening, before the *maghrib* prayer. The rituals followed in this ceremony may be summarized as follows: first, a plate (*agardani*) containing sweet-scented sticks and small round pieces of aloe-wood (*'ud*) is brought and placed by a khadim in the middle of the outer railings of the tomb. At the same time, four large candlesticks (*sham'dans*) are also kept in a corner, nearly facing the agardani. Soon, four khadims, one by one, occupy the vacant place near these sham'dans, facing the tomb, indicating that they have reserved these sham'dans for the coming ceremony. Outside the tomb three other khadims, with candles in their hands, start walking one after another from a place near the langarkhana where specially prepared candles are kept. As they start walking the drum-beating begins at the naubat-khana, a few steps from this place. On their way to the shrine they are received by the pilgrims, standing in two rows, hoping to have these candles moved over their heads. Passing through the sandal-khana mosque, these khadims enter the shrine from its eastern door, and from the doorstep of the shrine they start reciting verses in praise of Khwaja Sahib. In the shrine a huge crowd gathers, all male pilgrims being allowed to attend it.

After reaching the candlesticks the first khadim lights the candle in his hand, the second supplies candles to the four standing khadims to be fixed in each sham'dan, while the third hands over a few candles to the *chiraghchi* (lamp or candlemaker), who puts all these on the permanently fixed silver candlesticks over the railings around the tomb.

[15] T. D. Broughton, *Letters from a Mahratta Camp* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 236–7; Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, p. 184.

[16] For the details of roshni see S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through Inscriptions*, pp. 30–1; Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, 224b; Akbar had ordered the mutasaddi of Sambher to supply one maund of oil to Syed 'Alam, Khadim, and to a pious man of his time.

Then the first khadim, who holds a single lit candle in his hand, lights the four candles of the sham'dan. These are put on top of their heads by the waiting khadims. The first khadim from the left then starts reciting verses in Persian in praise of Khwaja Sahib, most probably composed by Shaikh Hussain Nagori, a descendant of Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagori (d. 1276), the great disciple of Khwaja Sahib.[17]

After the recitation of these verses, the four sham'dans are taken into the four corners of the shrine. On the way the khadims carrying them move them over the heads of the gathered people. Then the general illumination inside the tomb begins. The first and last of three khadims now start lighting all the candles put in the silver lamps, permanently fixed over the railings. The first comes out from the southern door of the shrine. A candle in his hand, he starts moving it over the heads of all the women who are allowed to assemble in this courtyard, near the shrine of Bibi Hafiz Jamal, daughter of Khwaja Sahib. After he has lit the candle fixed at the shrine of Bibi Hafiz Jamal, the women are allowed to enter the tomb of Khwaja Sahib. Here the roshni ceremony comes to an end.

Karka is the term for the ceremony which is connected with the closing of the doors of the shrine for the night.[18] It takes place generally between 9 and 10 p.m. Except the inner part of the first railings, the whole tomb is cleaned by three khadims with farrashas, obviously permitted by the baridar, and followed by each other with an interval of a few minutes. Pilgrims are not permitted to enter the shrine but are allowed to stand outside the tomb in two rows, giving way to the khadims who come out from the tomb, one by one, at short intervals. They carry farrashas in their hands and touch them over the heads of the devotees whilst moving to-

[17] For details about him see Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dihlavi, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, pp. 174–6; Muhammad Ghauthi Shattari, *Gulzar-i Abrar* (photograph of MS. at the Library of the History Dept, Aligarh Univ.), pp. 156–8; M. Mujib, *The Indian Muslims* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967), p. 294; C. W. Troll, ed., *Islam in India*, II (Delhi: Vikas, 1985), pp. 61–3. Cf. also Rahman 'Ali, *Tadhkira-i 'Ulama-i Hind* (Karachi, 1963). Tirmizi wrongly identifies that great saint of Nagore with his descendant, Shaikh Hussain. See S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Ajmer Through the Inscriptions*, p. 31. *Gulzar-i Abrar*, pp. 35–36, 123.

[18] The etymology of this word is apparently unknown, yet it can be argued that it stands for 'finish', 'final', or 'the end.'

wards the sandali mosque, where in a permanently fixed small dustbin they put all the flowers, dust etc. When the khadims are engaged in cleaning the floor of the shrine outside in the courtyard, the troupe (chauki) of musicians (qawwals) (permanently and hereditarily employed by the Mughals) sing qawwalis.

As soon as the third and last khadim comes out with the farrasha in his hand, the *ghariyali* (time keeper) loudly announces that six *gharis* (a small period of time, i.e. 24 minutes) have passed.

The qawwals and all the people within the campus at once get up, and the qawwals start reciting karka verses in Bhojpuri and a local dialect, most probably composed either by Shaikh Mitha, a khadim and saint of high repute, or, as tradition says, by Mitha or Mithu, who was a musician during the reign of Jahangir. After that the doors of the shrine are closed, people perform taslim, and the ceremony comes to an end.[19]

Besides these rituals, naubat is played twice a day, i.e. in the morning, and at sunset. Langar (a free meal consisting of soup of barley) is also prepared daily at the langar-khana and distributed twice (after *fajar* and *'asr* prayers) among the general public.[20]

Thus, with regard to the main daily rituals, the khadims are in charge, and no one except them has the right to join them or intervene in their hereditary and independent status for performing these rituals.

WEEKLY AND MONTHLY FUNCTIONS

On the night that falls between Thursday and Friday a special *mahfil* (gathering) is arranged in the eastern courtyard, called Ahata-i Noor, in front of the shrine. A small cushion (*gadela*) is placed for the officers of the shrine (i.e. diwan and mutawalli) as

[19] For details of karka verses see 'Abdul Bari Ma'ani, *Hamare Khwaja*, 4th edn. (Ajmer, 1961), pp. 94–5; Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, p. 224b.

[20] Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, p. 224b. Maulwi 'Abdul Qadir, the author of the Waqa'i, was the sarishtadar of Ajmer from 1818 to 1823 and had also acted as the amīn of the dargah. He, however, severely criticized the dargah customs and rituals. Being a staunch Wahhabi, he disapproved of these as innovations having no sanction in Islam. However, in his writings he designates the English officials superior to him as Khudawand-i ni'mat, Agha and Malik and thus might easily be charged with *shirk* (polytheism) by puritans.

well as for the khadims, while for the general public a sheet of cloth (*farsh*) is spread.

The diwan, dressed in the typical style of a Mughal king rather than a spiritual head, is escorted by the torch-bearers, arrives at that place after *'isha* (night prayer), and takes his seat. The function begins with the recitation of the fatiha. This is followed by the distribution of *dalis* (small sweet-balls specially prepared for the function), first among the khadims and officials and then the general public.

The qawwals then start the audition (*sama'*) by singing religious and devotional songs, mainly in praise of Khwaja Sahib, and continue till the doors of the shrine are closed for the night. As the office of mutawalli had been abolished after Partition, it is the diwan who now presides over the function.[21] Moreover, the sixth being the date of Khwaja Sahib's demise, a special mahfil, with the same gaiety, is arranged at the same place on every sixth of the lunar month. During the month of Ramadan the audition generally remains suspended, and only the recitation of the fatiha is observed on these nights, and that only in the mahfil-khana adjacent to the Buland Darwaza.

On every sixth of the lunar month the khadims also arrange a function called *chatti sharif*. At about 9 a.m. at the same courtyard in front of the shrine, first of all, Qur'an-khwani—recitation of the whole Quran by a large number of people—takes place, and then one of the khadims starts reciting the *shajara-i Chishtiyya* (spiritual pedigree of the Chishti order) as well as other verses composed by Khwaja Sahib's ancestors. This takes hardly an hour, and with the recitation of the fatiha, prayers for pilgrims and the distribution of *batashas* (small sweet made of pure sugar), the ceremony comes to an end. People offer flowers at the shrine, and, generally, all the khadims, according to their capacity, prepare on the day some special food, including a sweet dish, recite the fatiha and feed a couple of people, either relations or pilgrims or the poor.

Besides these, a number of other *i'ras* (death anniversaries of great saints) are observed throughout the year. The celebrations of 'Id-i Milad-ud-Nabi, on both 'Ids (the Jannati darwaza is also opened on these feasts), Shab-i Barat (14 Sha'ban), Shab-i-Qadar (27 Ramadan) and the mouring of Ashura (10 Moharram), are note-

[21] *Letters from a Maharatta Camp*, pp. 238–9.

worthy. The 'urs of Khwaja 'Uthman Haruni (spiritual mentor of Khwaja Sahib), held on 5th Shawwal, is also important. On that occasion the Jannati darwaza, situated below the Jama' Masjid, is again opened for a day to enable pilgrims to pass through it.

The 'urs of Khwaja Fakhruddin Gardezi (27 Rajab), spiritual brother of Khwaja Sahib and ancestor of the present khadim community, is also celebrated with great devotion. On both occasions special qawwali mahfils are held and langar distributed. The 'urs of Khwaja Sahib's son, Khwaja Abu Sa'id (17 Rajab), and of his daughter, Bibi Hafiz Jamal (18 Rajab), are also celebrated at the shrine.[22]

Thus, during the whole year one kind of ceremony or the other takes place at the shrine, and religious activities and rituals are carried on in a manner which may, in one sense, tend to overshadow the true spirit which underlies the philosophy and thought of Khwaja Sahib. But, at the same time, all these activities keep the pilgrims and people busy in devotional activities and, in another sense, keep alive the Sufi spirit.

CEREMONIES HELD DURING THE ANNUAL 'URS

On the evening of 25 Jamadi-uth-thani, four or five days before the start of the 'urs, the flag (*nishan jhanda*) hoisting ceremony over the Buland darwaza is held. People, generally in new clothes, gather in the courtyard which faces both the degs and lies between the langar-khana and mahfil-khana (audition hall).[23] Also on the same day, qalandars and faqirs arrive from Delhi with the *charris* (big flags) of Qutub Sahib, the successor of Khwaja Sahib. The khadims, devotees and others form a procession at the lofty gate and, accompanied by a troupe of musicians, come to the shrine to offer homage. On the same day the inner gate of the tomb at the fort end, which is called *jhojhri*, is closed, probably to avoid any act of disrespect that might occur due to the huge crowd.[24]

On seeing the moon of Rajab, the seventh month of the Islamic

[22] For details of these see Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, pp. 225b, 228; Dargah Files, Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner.

[23] Waqa'i' 'Abdul Qadir Khani, p. 225b.

[24] Jhojhri appears to be a form of either *jusa* or *jisa* or *jisy*. The first word is used for the stones which form the enclosure of the sacred precints of Mecca

calendar, drums are beaten to herald the commencement of the annual ceremony. The permanent chauki (troupe) of qawwals arrive, and after maghrib (sunset prayers) sit in front of the shrine and repeatedly sing the following verses:

الٰہی تا بہ ابد آستانہ یار رہے . یہ آسرا ہے غریبوں کا برقرار رہے

Oh God, may this shrine of the beloved exist till the last day,
May this refuge of the poor remain for ever!

From the first Rajab the entire schedule of opening and closing the tomb undergoes a change. During the six days following that date, the tomb is cleaned and washed twice at night. The name of this ceremony is *ghusl* (bath, i.e. of the grave).

The first washing is generally performed between 8.30 and 10.30 p.m., and only khadims participate in it. They first sweep the flowers from around the tomb in the same manner as is done every day throughout the year, and then wash the mazar (grave) with rose water. The essence of flowers (*'itr, 'atr*) is sprinkled on the grave and inside the shrine. Afterwards, the khadims recite the fatiha and prayers of petition, and then open the doors for the general public.

The second ghusl takes place around 1 a.m., late at night, attended by the diwan, the seven representatives of the khadims called sarghanas (representatives of the seven families, and a keykeeper or baridar who is also a khadim. The process is completed within an hour, and then the shrine is closed for the night. The usual daily khidmat (service) of noon is not performed during these six days in order to enable pilgrims to visit the shrine during the whole day.

The second feature of the annual ceremony is the audition gatherings (mahfil-i sama') which are continuously held all six days in the mahfil-khana (situated between the Akbari mosque and Jumma masjid of Shahjahan); in the rooms (*hujrahs*) and the *gaddis* (sitting places of khadims) within the dargah, in the houses of khadims; and at other centres in the city. Spiritual and devotional songs create an atmosphere of love and respect towards Khwaja Sahib.

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on which sacrifices are offered; the second means kneeling, a kneeling position, or kneelers. In fact people offer nazar and also kneel to kiss the tomb. Therefore, it is quite possible that one of these words was initially used to identify this place, and later converted to jhajhri in colloquial language. See F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), p. 356.

The sitting arrangement, the protocol observed in these mahfils (gatherings), the mode of giving cash to the qawwals and the rules and discipline of such gatherings are some of the characteristic features of the audition held daily in the big hall between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. These again betray the impact of Mughal court etiquette. The diwan, dressed Mughal fashion, represents in fact the Mughal king rather than a religious dignitary, and comes escorted by the torch-bearers and mace-bearers wearing Mughal costumes. He takes his seat on the cushion (*gadela*) under a special tent (*dalbadal*) erected for the occasion. The mutawalli (superintendent), some of the khadims, few sajjadahs and dervishes from outside Ajmer also sit with him on the cushion, under the special tent.

The two mace-bearers remain standing by the side of the diwan to maintain discipline in the gathering and perform other petty jobs. The party of singers attached to the shrine is, from time immemorial, allowed first to perform its art, followed by the other troupes of qawwals from all over India. Their turn of singing is arranged beforehand by the authorities of the shrine.

At 1 p.m. the diwan leaves the place and arrives at the tomb to attend the second ghusl ceremony, leaving his representative to preside over the function. After his return from the shrine the function comes to an end.

Besides this officially organised music gathering in the big hall, the singing of spiritual poems (in Persian, Urdu and Bhojpuri languages) goes on simultaneously in other parts of the courtyard of the shrine, where a large number of singers gather from all over the country during this period to pay homage to Khwaja Sahib and to earn money.

The third feature of the 'urs ceremony is that a small door of the shrine on the western side, facing Jama' Masjid, called the Jannati-darwaza (door of the paradise), remains open to visitors throughout the six days. This door is generally kept closed for the whole year except on 'urs days, on both the 'ids, and on 6 Shawwal, when the 'urs of Khwaja Sahib's *pir* (spiritual mentor) is celebrated. Tradition has it that one who passes through this door will enter paradise or attain supreme spiritual bliss.

In the other parts of the shrine devotees may be seen reciting the Quran, performing milad sharif, praying and listening to religious songs, or engrossed in meditation.

The fourth feature is the unending stream of visitors gathering from different parts of the country. These come in crowds to pay

homage, each with garlands or a bunch of flowers or a cloth sheet or some other expensive offering. Several get their heads shaved, or weigh themselves in sugar, gur, or dry fruit. Recently, with the permission of the Indian government, an official delegation from Pakistan numbering around 200 attended the 'urs. Their sumptuous offering of a large velvet cloth sheet to the shrine added a new dimension to the annual 'urs.

Throughout these days of 'urs, the evening illumination ceremony (roshni) takes place in the eastern verandah of the shrine known as Begami-dalan, with the same elaborate code of rituals as is carried out inside the shrine. The entire main building of the shrine is illuminated every night with electrical bulbs and candles. Every morning the food prepared in both the degs is cooked by a particular group known as *andarkoti* (residents within the fort wall). The cost of the food and cooking is met by anyone who expects by this means to approach spiritual salvation. The expenses of illumination and free distribution of food (langar) are generally borne by devotees, though the Dargah Committee is permitted to cover these expenses as well as the expenditures incurred in the maintenance of the dargah out of the income (now a recurrent grant) of the waqf faqir, as per the waqf deed of Shahjahan.

Heads of the different shrines (sajjadah-nashins) and spiritual mentors of various mystical orders (*piran-i-'uzzam; masha'ikhs*) also gather on this occasion, accompanied by their followers, in order to receive the blessings of Khwaja Sahib, and to attract people to their own circle. Professional beggars from other cities come to Ajmer in their thousands. They crowd the streets and lanes around the shrine. The khadims remain extremely busy, not only in performing rituals and guiding pilgrims to the shrine but also in taking care of the board and lodging of devotees, who stay at their home, or, by their assistance, at other places.

The Friday prayer (*namaz-i jum'a*) is the other important gathering during these days. On that day the whole city seems to bow in reverence to the greatness of God (*Allah-o-akbar*).

QUL (FINAL) DAY CEREMONIES

On the night which falls between 5 and 6 Rajab, the celebration attains its peak of excitement and exultation. The sacred precincts of the shrine are crowded with thousands and thousands of people,

all occupied with performing rites and prayers, reciting the Quran, listening to qawwalis arranged by the khadims at their respective *gaddis* and *hujras* (cells) within the compound of the dargah.

On 6 Rajab, at about 11 a.m., pilgrims and all kinds of other visitors are banned from entering the dargah. The khadims, dressed in their best clothes, approach the shrine carrying flowers, essence of flowers ('atr) and sweets, etc. After laying *chiras* or *dastars* (small turbans) on each other's heads, they start performing the rites laid down by tradition for this special occasion.[25]

After the recitation of *shajara-i Chishtiya* (spiritual pedigree of Chishti order) by a khadim, and of some other verses composed in the form of a *faryad* (petition), they announce their allegiance to Khwaja Sahib and humbly ask for the gift to repent of their sins and shortcomings. They pray for all the devotees, and for the peace and prosperity of mankind, and remain engaged in the recitation of verses of Quran prayers and *darud* till the arrival of the diwan from the mahfil-khana, normally at about 1 p.m.

At the mahfil-khana the mahfil-i sama' starts at about 11 a.m., and only the qawwals of the dargah are entitled to sing on that day. At the end are sung the *dang*. Then *golas* are blown and drums beaten to mark the end of qul and 'urs. After this the diwan with one or two of his closest relatives for whose presence prior permission has been taken from the khadims, leaves for the shrine. At the Jannati-darwaza the baridar checks the diwan's companions and then allows them to enter the shrine. Soon after his entry into the shrine the Jannati-darwaza is closed.

On his arrival in the shrine the diwan kisses the tomb and offers flowers, and then one of the khadims, who happens to be his *wakil*, like the other pilgrims, ties a *dastar* (turban) over his head, spreads the cloth sheet over his bowed head, prays for him, and then gives him *tabarruk*, consisting of flowers, sandal and sweets. As a mark of respect the diwan offers him some cash as nazar. Then he sits down and the *fatiha khwans*, who are permanently and hereditarily employed, recite the fatiha, as well as prayers for the sovereign (*badshah-i Islam*), the diwan, the mutawalli and other officials, and for the general public.

The diwan then comes out from the shrine and returns to his

[25] Generally, white turbans are tied on the heads of elders of the family and coloured ones on younger heads.

haveli, whereas the khadims first visit their respective gaddis within the shrine precincts, where they bless waiting pilgrims and devotees before proceeding to their homes to offer the fatiha over the food, which is specially prepared on this day for distribution among pilgrims, relatives and poor.

In this way ends the 'urs of Khwaja Sahib, after which pilgrims start leaving Ajmer. The khadims help them depart, supplying them enough tabarruk of the 'urs, i.e. flowers and sandal powder, cardamons coated with sugar (*ila'ichi dana*), threads, etc., which they are expected to distribute among the people of their native places.

The rituals and practices described above are laid down in the constitution of the shrine and thus form an essential part of the reality of the shrine. They are carried out unconditionally and without alterations. Some of the rituals may be traced to the period of the early Chishti saints, while others were introduced by the Mughals. However, a few of them reflect local traditions and cultural influences. Fundamentalist Muslims have objected to these practices, but they have continued.

The Major Dargahs of Ahmadabad

Z. A. DESAI

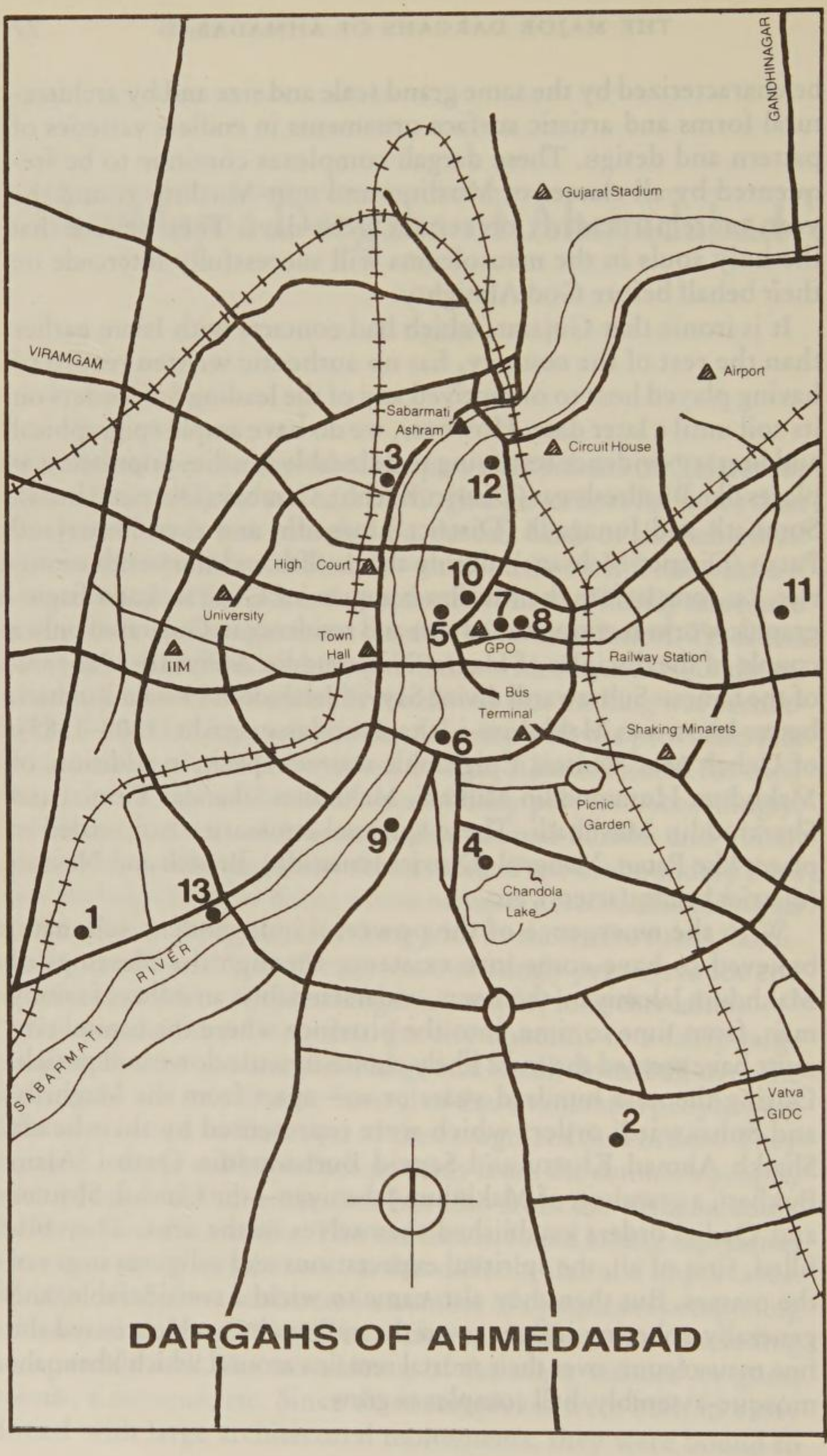
Ahmadabad was the capital of the powerful sultans of Gujarat for almost two centuries and seat of Mughal governors for more than two centuries. It was founded on the left bank of the Sabarmati river in 1411 by Ahmad Shah I,—third in the line, from whom it derives its name. The city is deemed to have been officially associated with saintly personages from the time of its foundation. Tradition associates four Ahmads and twelve Babas with the actual foundation ceremony of the new capital: It is believed that the king was permitted by Prophet Khidr to build the new city with the provision that its boundaries should be marked by four Ahmads noted for their utmost piety and strict observance of daily prayers. Accordingly, four Ahmads, the celebrated Shaikh Ahmad Khattu and Sultan Ahmad himself being two of them, marked out the boundary lines with the help of twelve Babas whose names are recorded in historical works. This new capital city, along with its successive rulers, continued to be blessed with the presence of saintly persons to the end of the independent Gujarat kingdom, and for long thereafter.

No wonder, therefore, that the city abounds in a fairly large number of saintly memorials, large and small, dotted all over the walled city and its suburbs. Several of these venerated people were followers of one or the other of the recognized Sufi orders. They enjoyed respect and reverence not only from the common people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, but also from the élite including the kings and their nobles. This veneration found lasting expression after their death in monuments that differ in size and importance. Wealthy disciples constructed a number of complexes comprising a *khanqah* or hospice with its different departments—including an assembly-hall, the mausoleum of the saint, visitors' or guest rooms, a mosque, etc. Since these complexes were built in a city dotted with large architectural monuments, they were bound to

be characterized by the same grand scale and size and by architectural forms and artistic surface ornaments in endless varieties of pattern and design. These dargah complexes continue to be frequented by all classes of Muslims and non-Muslims round the year, more particularly on certain week-days. They believe that the holy souls in the mausoleums will successfully intercede on their behalf before God Almighty.

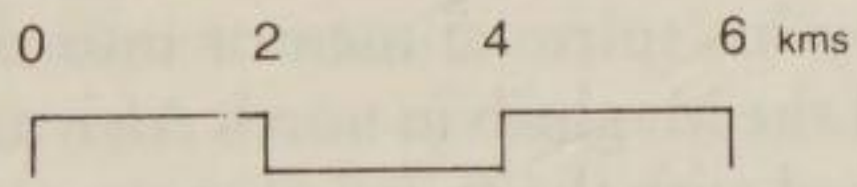
It is ironic that Gujarat, which had contacts with Islam earlier than the rest of the country, has no authentic written record of having played host to or received any of the leading Sufi orders on its soil until a later date. However, we do have ample epigraphical and literary evidence testifying to a sizeable Muslim population at places like Bhadreshwar (District Kachh), Cambay (District Kheda), Somnath and Junagadh (District Junagadh) and even hinterland Patan (District Mehsana), during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, i.e. long before the Muslim conquest of Gujarat. Later hagiographic works mention the advent and residence in Gujarat of only a couple of the disciples of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325) and of the famous Suhrawardi divine Sayyid Jalaluddin Husain Bukhari, better known as Makhdum-i Jahaniyan Jahan-gasht (1308–1385), of Uchch near Multan. Epigraphic sources speak, in addition, of Makhdum Husamuddin Multani, Makhdum Sikandar Tirmizi and Sharafuddin Mashhadi. These spiritual emissaries had settled at places like Patan, Mangrol (District Junagadh), Broach and Navsari (district headquarters), etc.

With the emergence of the powerful independent sultanate, believed to have come into existence through the blessings of Makhdum Jahaniyan, there was, understandably, an influx of saintly men, from time to time, into the province where the capital city must have seemed the most likely choice to settle down and preach. During the next hundred years or so—apart from the Maghribi and Suhrawardi orders which were represented by their heads Shaikh Ahmad Khattu and Sayyid Burhanuddin Qutb-i 'Alam Bukhari, a grandson of Makhdum Jahaniyan—the Chishti, Shattari and Qadiri orders established themselves in the area. They fulfilled, first of all, the spiritual expectations and religious urges of the masses. But then they also came to wield a considerable, and generally sobering influence on the ruling élite, which raised the fine mausoleums over their mortal remains around which khanqah-mosque-assembly-hall complexes grew.


GANDHINAGAR
Gujarat Stadium
VIRAMGAM
Airport
Sabarmati
Ashram
Circuit House
3
12
High Court
10
11
University
7
8
5
GPO
Town
Hall
IIM
Railway Station
Bus
Terminal
Shaking Minarets
6
Picnic
Garden
9
4
Chandola
Lake
13
1
RIVER
SABARMATI
Vatva
GIDC
2
DARGAHS OF AHMEDABAD

LEGEND

1 TOMB OF SHAIKH AHMAD OF KHATTU, SARKHEJ
2 TOMB OF QUTB-I-ᶜALAM, VATVA
3 TOMB OF SHAMᶜ-I-BURHANI, USMANPURA
4 TOMB OF SHAH ᶜALAM, SHAH ᶜALAM
5 TOMB OF SHAH WAJIHUDDIN ᶜALAWI, KHANPUR
6 TOMB OF PIRANPIR, JAMALPUR
7 TOMB OF CHHOTE AIDRUS
8 TOMB OF SHAIKH-AL-AIDRUS
9 TOMB OF SHAH ABU TURAB
10 TOMB OF SHAH ᶜABDUL WAHHAB, KHANPUR
11 TOMB OF MALIK SHABAN, RAKHIAL
12 TOMB OF DARYA KHAN, SHAHI BAGH
13 TOMB OF AᶜZAM MUᶜAZZAM, VASNA



Some of these establishments have over the years earned a reputation for effective cure of physical maladies as well as psychological disorders. At present these dargahs are, in their day-to-day management, manned by poorly educated paid attendants or *mujawirs* who see it as their main task to help visitors in coping with the task of correctly performing rites and ceremonies at the tomb. The annual '*urs* celebrations at these dargahs are held with pomp and fanfare. They last in some cases for about a week and are chiefly confined to the common ritual of *sandal sharif* (washing the grave with sandal paste and scented water—a ceremony that starts at dead of the night and lasts several hours) amidst recitations of the Holy Quran on the first day, recitation of the spiritual pedigree (*shajara*) and the *fatiha*, accompanied or followed by the distribution of sweets and/or *langar* (dinner) on the next. During these days men and women of all age-groups visit the dargah in large numbers.

Today it is difficult to say that these establishments have much spiritual guidance to offer. Their main activities seem to be confined to the maintenance of the tomb building, the management of whatever land and property endowed by the Muslim rulers in the past has escaped the vicissitudes of time and the greed of those in charge, and to looking after the flow of believers who come with offerings of flowers, coconuts, scented sticks or cash. The *sajjada-nashins* of these establishments are highly respected, and some of them find time to visit the large following of disciples residing in Gujarat and beyond. But it is difficult to say if they impart to the disciples any substantial spiritual training in the specific practices and the basic principles of the Sufi order to which they belong.

The first eminent saint who came and settled at Sarkhej near Ahmadabad was Shaikh Ahmad of Khattu (d. 1445) of the Maghribi order. He commanded the respect of no less than eight of the kings of Delhi and Gujarat. Born in an aristocratic family of Delhi in 1337/8, and named Nasiruddin, he was brought up from early childhood by Babu Ishaq of Khattu (District Nagaur, Rajasthan, written Khattu by Muslim writers), the pioneer of the order in India. Apart from receiving the conventional intellectual and physical education, he was initiated by his spiritual mentor into the doctrines of the Maghribi order of the Maghrib in north Africa, where Babu Ishaq himself was invested with the spiritual succcessorship. Babu Ishaq had also acted for some time as the spiritual head of the order there, before he finally decided to return to India.

Shaikh Ahmad appears in Indian history as a remarkable person and an important saint. After the death of his preceptor Babu the disciple undertook in 1374 a journey to the holy cities of Islam, in the course of which he came in contact with many scholars and Sufis. At the time of Timur's invasion and the sack of Delhi in 1398 he is reported to have boldy interceded with the intrepid Mongol aggressor for the life and property of the residents of the capital. He is said even to have accompanied him to Samarqand as a member of the large captive group of soldiers and others, until he ultimately succeeded in his mission by virtue of his piety and spiritual prowess. These impressed the people around him considerably, especially the princes and princesses.

On his return, Shaikh Ahmad came in about 1400 to Sarkhej, opposite Asawal on the bank of the Sabarmati, in the immediate neighbourhood of which Ahmadabad was founded a decade later. Also called Ganj-Bakhsh (treasure-bestowing) on account of his generous nature, he passed away in 1445 at the age of 108 years. In the same year, Sultan Muhammad II (r. 1442–51), the fourth king of Gujarat, commenced but could not complete the construction of his mausoleum, which was finished in the reign of his son and successor Sultan Qutubuddin Ahmad II (r. 1451–8).

The mausoleum is an imposing multi-domed structure, remarkable for its large size as well as design. It is the largest building of its type in Gujarat, stands on a high plinth with an exquisite little porch-like sixteen-pillared pavilion, covered by nine small domes, projecting from the middle of its southern side. Measuring about 100 feet square on plan, it consists of a square pillared hall enclosed by a wide four-bayed deep and four-aisled verandah fronted by arched openings of varying width. The verandah is walled up only up to dado level, the upper portion filled with panels of stone trellis work in different geometrical designs; a deep cornice supported on short thick but shapely brackets overhangs it at the roof level under an arch-shaped parapet. The central square chamber again encloses a twelve-sided open-arched interior chamber, supporting a large central Hindu type of dome, and has in the centre the saint's grave under a canopy ornamented with beautiful mother-of-pearl work, of which sufficient traces remain. Perforated brass panels of highly pleasing designs cover the space between the pillars of this chamber above the dado level. The large single shapely dome is juxtaposed with thirteen smaller domes of similar shape on the verandah roof. The entire building, constructed with the prevalent

trabeate or pillar-and-beam style, is one of the most beautiful sepulchral monuments of India.

This dargah complex has, adjoining the mausoleum of the saint, the great mosque in the usual open-courtyard mosque-plan, whose multi-domed prayer hall in the west is, like the collonaded corridor on the three sides, a hall of uniform height, raised on tall pillars that have no arched façade. Though simple and not lavishly ornamented in stonework—as is characteristic of the later Ahmadabad mosques—and though the want of minarets or prominent eaves would appear to mar its outward effect, yet the perfection of simple grace and unaffected elegance of the building, and particularly the majestic interior of its prayer-hall, are not easily matched.

None of the edifices of the khanqah complex exists anymore. With the added attraction of its picturesque situation on the bank of a natural pond, the dargah became a favourite resort of Sultan Mahmud Begda I (r. 1458–1511), who commenced a large architectural complex there after converting the pond into a well-built polygonal lake with stone-steps, with a group of royal tombs on its northern and palace-buildings on its south-west corner. This entire complex does not seem to have been completed during his reign, as is generally believed, for a recently discovered inscription assigns at least the construction of the tank to Mahmud I's son and successor, Muzaffar Shah II (r. 1511–1526); the tank seems to have been named Ahmadsar (lake of Ahmad). The fame of the saint as a holy man was undoubtedly instrumental in the choice of the vicinity of his tomb not only by these sultans and that of other male and female members of the royal house as their last resting place, but also by noblemen and other persons of note. Akbar's poet-laureate Ghazali Mashhadi (d. 1572) also lies buried there.

The entire dargah complex seems to have had, originally, a walled enclosure with a tall covered gateway serving as its main entrance in the north. The area outside it, all around, is dotted with graves and mausolea.

The saintly establishment enjoyed magnificent grants of land and villages from the state, which, on account of the usual factors—including mismanagement and misappropriation—has shrunk through the passage of centuries. The considerable estate which remains is allegedly sold out or encroached upon by land-grabbers, with the reported connivance, if not actual participation, of persons responsible for the management of the dargah.

The 'urs ceremony of the saint is held on the 12–13 Shawwal. On the first day the sandal ceremony is held at about 2.00 a.m. amidst the recitation of the Holy Quran, attended by about 500 people. In the morning *khichri* (a rice-pulse preparation) is distributed to those present. On that and the following day, vast multitudes of men and women visit the dargah to offer fatiha and present flowers, coconut and cash. Throughout the year the dargah attracts people, especially on Sundays and Thursday evenings.

The other important dargah of Ahmadabad is that of Sayyid Burhanuddin Qutb-i 'Alam, mentioned earlier. The Sayyid is the progenitor of the famous Bukhari family of Gujarat which, through his far more celebrated son Shah 'Alam, has had the unique distinction in the subcontinent—shared probably only by a later local saintly family belonging to the Chishti order—of producing no less than half a dozen successive scions renowned as much for piety as for their excellence in learning and letters. Among these there were learned exponents of the Quran, writers of religious tracts, of poetry, and the like. Buried at Vatwa, where he died on 8 Dhul-Hijja or 10 December 1453, the young Qutb-i 'Alam arrived in about 1400 at Patan from his native town, Uchh, and soon became famous for his religiosity and piety, earning the respect of the actual founder of the Gujarat sultanate, Zafar Khan (r. 1391–1411). He shifted to the newly-founded capital, where he was received with respect by Ahmad Shah I, who is credited with having composed a Persian poem in his praise. Later he shifted to Vatwa, then a suburb, where he lies buried under an imposing mausoleum.

The Vatwa dargah complex, entered from a gateway on the west side, is, as usual, built around the nucleus of the saintly khanqah and today comprises a group of two mausolea, a mosque and a row of buildings in the north which perhaps once formed part of the khanqah itself. The noblemen of the court of the reigning king, Sultan Qutbuddin Ahmad II, are believed to have raised a small edifice over the saint's mortal remains which was subsequently converted into a large mausoleum, one of the largest in Gujarat, reportedly by Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1458–1511). The mosque was built in 1469 in the reign of that monarch by Malik Isan (or, according to another reading of its epigraph, Bashir) Sultani, who was given the title Khawass al-Mulk. It is built in the then prevailing flat or trabeate style, as is the slightly smaller mausoleum nearby, raised to the memory of the saint's eldest son. In Qutb-i 'Alam's

tomb, with its vast dimension and design, the arch and vault take the place of the pillar and beam, and a large dome is placed on an intermediate high square three-arched pavilion-like chamber raised over the main central hall below. This chamber is enclosed by a one-bayed verandah which is extended on one side by a three-aisled porch. This original plan does not seem to have been fully implemented, the building having remained incomplete, with outer aisles wanting and with no trellis work in arches. The incomplete state is popularly ascribed to the saint's displeasure at attempts to build a large tomb for him. In any case, despite its dilapidated state, the mausoleum is a remarkable monument with a distinct architectural style.

Qutb-i 'Alam was highly respected by high and low alike and celebrated for his catholicity and piety. His dargah attracts visitors on weekdays, of course, and annually on the occasion of the 'urs, held on 8 Dhul-Hijja. The sajjada-nashin has in his possession a manuscript copy of the Persian translation of the Quran, which, according to competent scholars, dates from the fifteenth century and is ascribed to a scholar-saint of Gujarat. But a far more famous relic belonging to the place is the Loh-Lakkad-Patthar, a curious substance composed of iron, wood and stone. It is related of this marvellous object that when the saint was going for his *tahajjud* prayers (prayers just after midnight) his foot struck against a hard, thorny object. When he picked it up, he exclaimed in the local tongue: *kya hai, loha hai, ke lakkar hai, ke patthar hai* (What is it? Is it iron or wood or stone?) It was found in the morning to be all three things joined together. The object was peered at by Humayun and Akbar; the latter also carried half of it with him to Agra. According to Abul Fazl, it used to be suspended over the grave of the saint. Later, however, it was removed to the sajjada-nashin's residence.

The mosque apart, there is no inscription giving the date of the tomb or its builder. But on one of the columns of the mausoleum a Persian *ruba'i* (quatrain) is engraved in fine *nasta'liq*. It is composed by a great grandson of the saint, Sayyid Jalal Ridawi Shah, with the poetical name Riḍa—he was Shah Jahan's Sadrus-Sudur; dated AH 1049 (AD 1639–40), it merely contains a poetic eulogy of the mausoleum 'whose dome has become the head of the cap of the sky which had earlier no head on its cap.'

Qutb-i 'Alam had a number of disciples who made their name

as scholars and saintly persons. One of them was Sayyid 'Uthman, who was also the author of a number of books, of which *Madarij al-Ma'arij* is one. He composed verses in Persian, and his dargah in the Usmanpura locality, a little beyond Gujarat Vidyapith, is visited by scores of people in general and by those afflicted with physical and mental maladies in particular. The crowds come particularly on Thursdays and Fridays and, naturally, on the annual 'urs which falls on 15 Jumada I.

Sayyid 'Uthman was a favourite disciple of his spiritual mentor, who had given him the honorific Sham'-i Burhani (lit. Torch or Candle of Burhan, i.e. of Qutb-i 'Alam). It is by this name that he is popularly known. Under the guidance of his preceptor he joined the Sufi order at an early age and soon attained high station. He became one of the foremost Sufis of his time and obtained from his spiritual guide permission to enrol disciples. Sultan Mahmud I is reported to have constructed a large madrasa where he imparted religious instruction. The Sayyid died in 1459, not long after his master. His tomb and mosque are said to have been constructed by the reigning king, Mahmud Shah I. No epigraph recording the name and date of the builder has survived in either of the two buildings. The mosque, a fine structure in the pillared-hall variety of Gujarat mosques, built entirely on the trabeate system, comprises only the spacious prayer-hall, raised on tall pillars with balconied windows in the north and south walls, and ordinary windows in the west wall. Its slightly tapering minars at the front corners, profusely carved with mouldings and string-courses and panels sculpted in a variety of designs and patterns, rise into five stages above the roof level, each separated from the other by open galleries supported on beautiful brackets. Originally it appears to have overlooked a large courtyard, with the saint's tomb in the centre.

The *rauza* is now denuded of some of its original features, having suffered much at the hands of vandals as well as the ravages of time. But despite that, it is an imposing structure in the Gujarat tomb architectural style. It is basically a pillared square pavilion-like chamber, roofed by a fine shapely dome placed on beams with a spacious flat-roofed verandah of colonnades on four sides. Smaller graceful domes, one at each corner and in the centre of the side of the roof, impart a dignified balance to the upper part of the mausoleum. A prominent eave and arched parapet running all around invest the structure with great charm.

While not much is known about his disciples or descendants, Sayyid 'Uthman's family seems to have continued his tradition of learning, for we find a great-grandson of his, Sayyid Yusuf, having translated into Persian in 1487 the famous Arabic biographical dictionary *Wafayat al-a'yan wa anba' abna' al-zaman* of Ibn Khallikan (1211–82). His death anniversary is celebrated in the usual manner in Ahmadabad and is well attended.

By far the most famous dargah of Ahmadabad is that of Qutb-i 'Alam's son and successor, Sirajuddin Muhammad (fifteenth century)—better known by the honorific Shah 'Alam—situated in the southern quarter of the city, originally named Rasulabad, but popularly called Shah 'Alam.

Related to the royal family of Sind by marriage and also to that of Gujarat, Shah 'Alam wielded great political as well as social influence at the court and among scholars and spiritual teachers. On account of his great sanctity he was the most widely acclaimed spiritual leader of his day. Historical and hagiographic works are replete with accounts of the active part he played in the political, social and religious life of Gujarat. Sultans are reported to have composed verses in his praise—Qutubuddin Ahmad I's verses in Gujari or proto-Urdu have come down to us—and noblemen of high rank used to pay their respects to him. Every week, after the Friday prayers, he would hold an open session attended by men from different walks of life—noblemen, clergy, learned men, teachers, students (who were most lovingly treated by the saint), poets, merchants, artisans, labourers, mendicants and dervishes (who were christened *muluk-i-jannat*—princes of paradise—by him), and the like. At these meetings religious and spiritual matters were discussed, with frequent learned and illuminating comments and interjections by the saint himself; presents and offerings accepted and invariably returned, usually in a larger measure; and demands of the needy and deserving fulfilled. In the course of religious discussions, tracts composed by the saint were read in full or in part, and verses recited by visiting poets in praise of the saint—who used to discourage this. These Friday meetings, which were in a way sessions for imparting instruction to the disciples, were faithfully reported from meeting to meeting in a work called Kunuz-i Muhammadi, which is unfortunately lost. Many accounts narrated in this work, however, have been incorporated, at times verbatim, in the seventeenth-century seven-volume compilation

named Juma 'at-i Shahiyya, by the sixth lineal and spiritual descendant of the saint, Sayyid Muhammad Maqbul 'Alam, who was a notable scholar and poet. A perusal of this work, of which only four volumes have so far come to light, attests to the fine quality of the heart and mind of the saint, as well as to the high quality of his spiritual leadership, his vast erudition and, above all, his humility and humane disposition, all of which made him vastly popular.

A small incident illustrating his sense of the dignity of labour is memorable: On one hot day, the saint went to inspect the work of the excavation of a tank near his khanqah, undertaken at his instance and called Mustafasar by him. As was his practice, he spent much time there. In the course of his inspection he asked the man in charge to be considerate towards the labourers engaged in the work. He exhorted him to

> exert himself to the utmost in winning over the hearts [*ta'mir-i dil*, lit. building the heart] of the labourers to show utmost care and consideration in the construction of the tank lest anyone's dues were withheld. He should give priority to the building of the heart over the building of clay [*ta'mir-i dil bar ta'mir-i gil*], or rather he should make 'this' the means of attaining 'that'.

The saint's dargah is situated along with other buildings of the complex in a now largely destroyed lofty and bastioned two-tier walled enclosure, entered from the north through an extant handsome gateway, or through another one from the west. While the exact nature of the habitation and buildings of the area, as they existed at the saint's time, cannot be determined now, they obviously comprised a vast self-contained unit with khanqah, mosque and residential quarters.

The principal surviving buildings of the dargah complex are two beautiful mausolea, a fine large mosque and the *jama'at khana* or assembly hall. The last standing on the left within the gate, is said to have been built originally by Sultan Muzaffar III (r. 1561–1572) and was partly destroyed by the British in 1780 to furnish material for the siege of the city. To the right, across the passage, are buildings which once formed part of the hospice. They now house a girls' school for religious studies. These buildings overlook a handsome reservoir, beyond which, in the centre of this inner enclosure, originally shaded by rows of trees and flower beds, lies the mausoleum of the saint himself.

Considered perhaps the most beautiful monument of its type at Ahmadabad, the large mausoleum conforms in plan and design to the prevailing local tomb-type: An inner pillared square chamber is filled with beautifully carved marble trellis work and an outer arcaded verandah similarly filled with excellent perforated stone-screen work. The entire building is roofed by a large central dome, with a series of smaller ones along the four sides. The interior of the dome was richly decorated with painting and mother-of-pearl work. The extremely pleasing design and fine proportions of the tomb, its well-outlined dome of graceful curve, the beautiful designs of its trellis work, the elegant open-cut brass-work of its doors, a prominent cornice on shapely brackets, an arch-shaped parapet, and also the high plinth on which it is built—have all combined to make it one of the outstanding edifices of India.

The mausoleum was built during the reign of Bahadur Shah (1526–37) by the side of the Mustafasar tank in 1531–2, more than half a century after the saint's demise, which took place in 1475. The metrical inscription on the main entrance to the mausoleum names as the builder 'Abdullatif, son of Burhan, entitled Majlis-i Sami Khan-i A'zam Taj Khan. The marble railing around the saint's cenotaph was constructed in 1769–70 by the then sajjada-nashin, Sayyid 'Abdush-Shukur, according to the inscription carved thereon.

To the west of the tomb is the mosque, believed to have been built by Muhammad Salih Badakhshi, with its minarets started by one Najabat Khan and completed by Saif Khan, husband of the sister of Mumtaz Mahal of Taj Mahal fame. While in general design it broadly conforms to the open-pillared-hall variety of Gujarat mosques—tall minars at front-angles and roofed by three principal and a series of small domes—it departs from the traditional style in the treatment of its arched façade and interior of the hall, the roof of which is not laid on pillar-and-beam but on arches springing from the pillars through bracket, diagonal beam or triangular pendentive. Greatly impressive and of a somewhat novel type are its tall, profusely-carved cylindrical minars, rising five storeys above the roof-level, topped by domed kiosks and with circular galleries on brackets marking each stage.

To the south of the mosque, across the road leading from the saint's tomb to the western gateway, is another mausoleum on the same plan and pleasing design, but much smaller. This was cons-

tructed over the grave of the earlier mentioned Maqbul 'Alam. Over his grave in the centre is fixed a stone tablet containing impressions of the footprint of the Holy Prophet (*qadam-i rasul*), about whose history little is known.

As elsewhere, the sanctity which the mausoleum area acquired made it a coveted burial place and, as a result, the entire area is dotted with graves, all uninscribed, except one which, according to its versified epitaph, enshrined the remains of Ghadanfar Baig, who died in 1691–2 of wounds inflicted by the enemy's sword and who expressed a desire to be buried at the foot of the saint.

The annual 'urs celebration of the saint, perhaps the most elaborate at Ahmadabad, is held from 16 to 22 Jumada II. It is preceded by the distribution of sweet-balls on the sighting of the new moon of that month by the sajjada-nashin. On the first day of the actual celebrations, the *ghilaf* (cover) placing ceremony is held after the afternoon prayers. On the second day, from midnight, commences the sandal-sharif ceremony in camera by the sajjada-nashin, with *qaris* and *huffaz* reciting the Quran by turn; it ends at about 4.30 in the morning, with the sajjada-nashin giving a public audience to the vast gathering of people in the spacious assembly hall. On the third day, after the night prayers, a *milad* session is held in the same hall. On the fourth day the sajjada-nashin of the Vatwa saint pays a ceremonial visit to the tomb accompanied by its sajjada-nashin; whereafter both attend the *sama'* session starting from sunset prayers and lasting till late at night, with an interval of night prayers; the artistes taking part in the sama' are honoured by the sajjada-nashin with floral and cash presents. The next morning, that is on the 19th, the *shajara* is recited at the mausoleum and sweets distributed. On the fifth day, at the end of the afternoon prayers, a floral sheet is presented at the mausoleum; immediately afterwards the second mausoleum is visited and a sheet of flowers placed there on the grave, followed by the recitation of the shajara and distribution of sweets. On the sixth day a poetical gathering is held after night prayers, graced by the sajjada-nashin with his presence. Poets recite in praise of the Holy Prophet and the saint. The seventh day is reserved for women, who visit the mausoleum in large numbers. During these days thousands of people pay homage to the saint.

The next dargah of note in Ahmadabad is that of the sixteenth-century eminent Sufi, outstanding scholar-teacher and traditionalist of Gujarat, Shah Wajihuddin 'Alawi (1504–89). A pupil of such

prominent masters as Maulana 'Imaduddin Tarimi and Shaikh Abul Fazl Kazeruni, he was a follower of the Qadiri order. He was later initiated into the Shattari order by Sayyid Muhammad Ghauth of Gwalior. The latter had resided temporarily in Ahmadabad and established there a mosque and a khanqah. Shah Wajihuddin started a madrasa for higher religious studies and soon established his reputation as a great teacher. His madrasa became an academy of learning and sufistic pursuits, which attracted a large number of students from different parts of the country, including distant Bengal. Many of these became renowned in their respective regions for learning and scholarship. One of them, for instance, was the well-known savant Sayyid Jalaluddin Mah 'Alam, a spiritual successor of Shah 'Alam. The celebrated traditionalist Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi (1551–1642) had also received instruction from him when he was in Ahmadabad on his way to the holy cities. Shah Wajihuddin had transmitted the Shattari order to Shah Sibghatullah of Bharuch, who later migrated to Medina, and who was responsible for its propagation in Arabia and elsewhere. Shah Wajihuddin was a prolific writer and author of about 200 works on different subjects, including glosses and super-glosses on books and textbooks of Sufism, Quranic commentary *Hadith*, logic, etc.

Shah Wajihuddin commanded great respect at the court, which, however, he never visited, as well as among all groups of people. His seminary was visited by kings, noblemen, learned men and Sufis. He was extremely sympathetic to the cause of the downtrodden and the oppressed. He died in 1589 and was buried in the khanqah at Khanpur. A fine mausoleum was later built over his mortal remains by Shaikh Farid Bukhari, entitled Murtada Khan, governor of Gujarat during 1606–9. The construction of the khanqah is attributed to Sadiq Khan, a noble of Akbar's court, whereas the small mosque in the complex is believed to have been built by Shaikh Haidar, the saint's grandson, who was the sajjadanashin when Jahangir paid homage at the mausoleum in 1618.

As it stands today, the mausoleum, on plan, consists of two square chambers, raised on pillars in the usual local style and placed together along the east-west axis. The central part of the western chamber containing the grave of the saint is raised higher through a square structure with perforated stone-screen panelled sides. They support the main dome, which is of an unusual bulbous shape. The rest of the entire roof is of uniform height, covered with large

and small domes of usual shape, corresponding in number to that of the compartments below. This plan has placed the main dome not in the centre but at one corner, a somewhat unusual feature. The arcaded exterior is enclosed with panelled stone-traceries and shaded by the usual cornice-cum-brackets, and is topped by an arch-shaped parapet.

As in the centre of the other Sufi establishments of Ahmadabad, the saintly line of Shah Wajihuddin continues to be represented by a sajjada-nashin who commands a large number of followers in Gujarat and in some parts of the Deccan. The khanqah possessed until a few decades ago a fine library of Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscripts. This no longer exists. Shah Wajihuddin's 'urs is celebrated in the usual fashion on the last day of Muharram and the first of Safar.

Among the other dargahs of Ahmadabad are those of Piranpir, Shah Abu Turab Shirazi, Shah 'Abdul-Wahhab, the Senior and Junior 'Airdrus, and Pir Muhammad Shah.

The most famous of these is that of Pir Muhammad Shah, who came to Ahmadabad from Bijapur in the eighteenth century. A renowned Sufi, a profound scholar and a man of a literary bent of mind, Sayyid Muhammad, popularly known as Pir Muhammad Shah, was a posthumous child of a saintly family of the Qadiri order, born on 5 Sha'ban 1100 (15 May 1689) at Bijapur, where his forefathers had migrated from Gujarat. He was brought up under the paternal care of his uncle, Sayyid 'Abdurrahman, who, apart from arranging for his formal education in traditional religious lore, also initiated him into the tenets of the Qadiri order from quite a young age. He undertook a journey to Mecca and Medina, where too he devoted himself to the study of various religious sciences like Quranic exegesis, tradition, sufism, etc. under reputed teachers. After a stay of thirteen years he returned to India and came to Ahmadabad at the age of twenty-three. Here he first took up residence in the famous Bibji's mosque in the eastern suburb of Rajpur, which was then mostly populated by traders and artisans, and subsequently in the Jama' mosque in the city where he passed the rest of his life. He led a more or less secluded life, going out but rarely. Yet he regularly visited the tomb of Shah Wajihuddin, whom he held in great reverence. He imparted esoteric instruction to some disciples and was also given to utterances of *shathiyat* (theopathic locutions).

Members of the Sunni Bohra community *en bloc* became his followers. As a result he became involved, unwittingly perhaps, in some dispute with another leader, who seems to have offended the Sayyid's disciples, ending in a brawl. The matter came to the notice of the local governor and the affair was amicably settled, with the offender expressing his regrets. But the episode seems to have badly affected the saint's health. He fell into a swoon and never recovered. He died on 26 Jumada II 1163 (22 May 1750).

Pir Muhammad Shah was buried within the walled city, near the haveli of Salahuddin Khan, where soon afterwards his disciples from the town of Kadi (District Mehsana) constructed his tomb, a mosque and a garden close by. Built in a degenerate Mughal style, the saint's mausoleum is a large domed building in the usual tomb plan of a square mortuary chamber enclosed by an arcaded verandah on four sides. The verandah has five engrailed arches in each side, of varying shape and height, and above are a large dome in the centre and four smaller ones at the corners. While the corner domes are of the usual types of Gujarat dome, the central one has a curious and unusual shape. Instead of being a single unit, it comprises a set of two domes, one of a smaller size but of pleasing shape, placed above the larger one below. Save for this novel feature, there is nothing special about the edifice, which is kept in an excellent state of preservation.

The saint has a considerable following among the wealthy trading community of Sunni Bohra Muslims spread over Ahmadabad and other important towns like Patan, Surat and Baroda. Through the munificent offerings of these well-to-do businessmen disciples, the saintly establishment has, over the years, acquired considerable landed property in and around the dargah. On account of the appreciation of land prices, the value of these lands has risen considerably. The entire large estate is maintained by a registered Board of Trustees called the Dargah Pir Muhammad Shah Committee. Its members and those of its sub-committees are elected from among the members of the community.

The saint's death anniversary is celebrated on a grand scale. Hundreds of devotees from the city and far-off places throng the mausoleum, which provides within is spacious premises, board and lodging facilities to them. On the first day the usual sandalwood ceremony is held; on the second the fatiha is recited amidst the recitation of the Quran by a group of about thirty trained garis.

This is followed by serving the participants in the 'urs with a special dish of pulao called in popular parlance Pir Muhammad Shahi pulao. Apart from this, the death anniversaries of the saint's uncle and first preceptor Sayyid 'Abdurrahman, of Shah Wajihuddin 'Alawi, and of the founder of the Qadiri order, Sayyid 'Abdulqadir Jilani, are also celebrated with the fatiha ceremonies and the distribution of sweets and eatables. In the month of Ramadan a special dish, *halim*, is prepared and served to fasting visitors who come to stay for *tarawih* (additional night prayers during Ramadan) prayers in the mosque.

The Dargah Trust also conducts welfare and social service activities like training classes for girls and women, promoting education by giving scholarships, books and similar facilities. Attached to the dargah is a spacious building. One wing of it houses a large library, open to the public, which, apart from some 3000 printed books in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Gujarati and English, has a fine collection of about 2000 valuable Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscripts on different branches of Islamic learning and literature.[1]

Pir Muhammad Shah himself composed verses with 'Aqdas' and 'Shahid' as his poetic names. He has to his credit a number of tracts in Persian and Gujari or Dakani verse. Manuscripts of these are preserved in the library. A number of his disciples, both male and female, have composed verses in Persian and Urdu in his praise, as also mourning his death; collections of these poems, which are also preserved in the library, furnish much-needed material for the assessment of Gujarat's contribution to Urdu language and literature.

The Piranpir's dargah in the Jamalpur quarter of the city was erected in the seventeenth century over the grave of Shah 'Abdulkhaliq, a descendant of the famous saint of Baghdad, Shaikh 'Abdulqadir Jilani (d. 1166), and is in the usual tomb style of perforated stone-screen walls. It attracts a number of visitors on certain weekdays and in larger numbers on the 'urs anniversary of the buried saint, as well as of the founder of the order, which falls on 11 Jumada I.

The rauza of Shaikh al-Aidrus, who belonged to a renowned saintly family of Hadramaut in southern Arabia—from where he

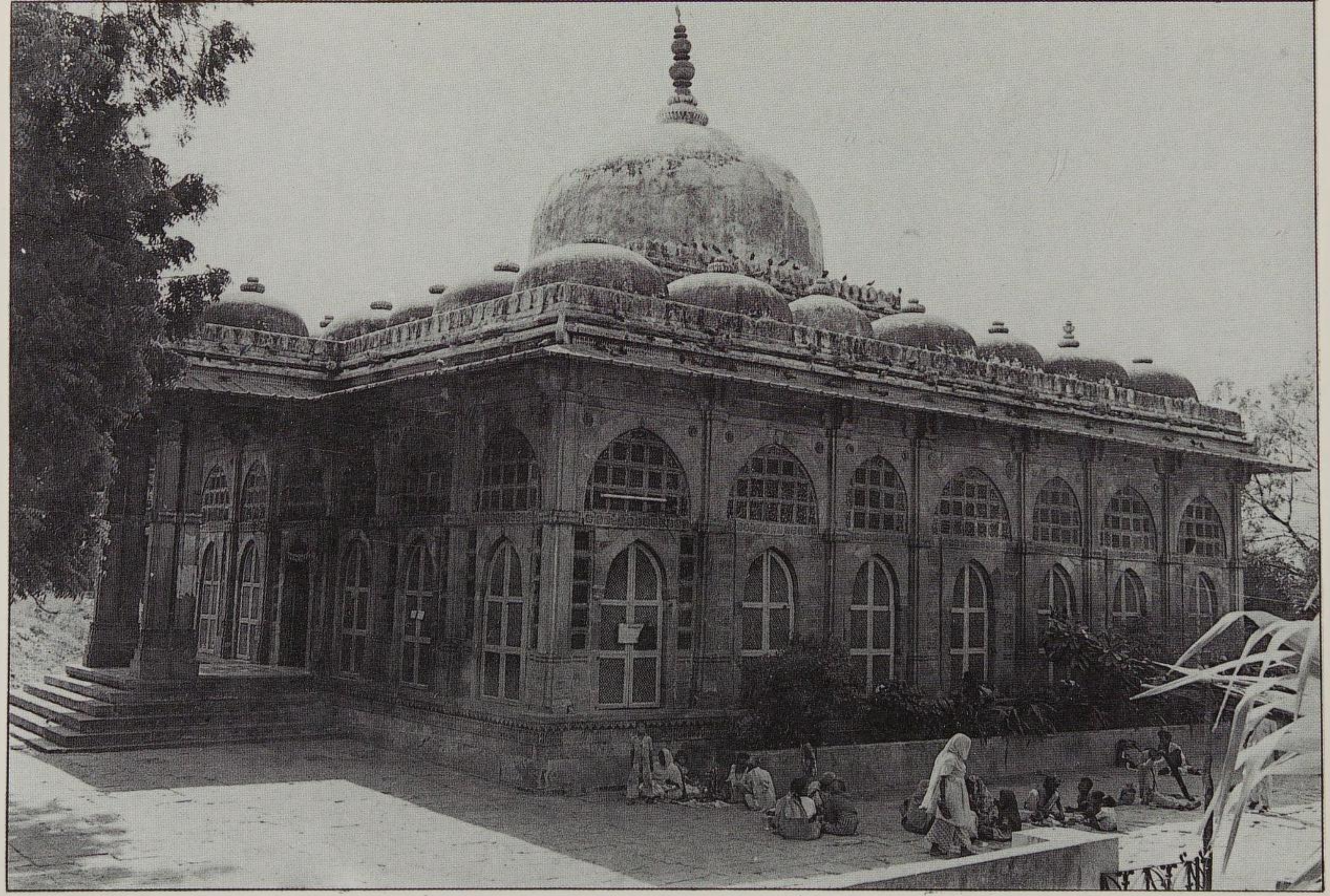
[1] Cf. Muhammad Zuber Qureshi, 'The Library of Hazrat Pir Muhammad Shah at Ahmadabad,' in C. W. Troll (ed.), *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985), pp. 282–300.

came to Gujarat in the fifteenth century—is situated in the Jhaveri-wada locality and is a fine mausoleum of stone of the domed and perforated stone-screen-walls variety. The tomb attributed to his son Shaikh 'Abdulqadir al-Aidrus, not far from that of his father, is also a beautiful edifice in the square-chamber-enclosed-by-verandah plan. Its dilapidated entrance gateway was originally of fine workmanship. A man of Sufi temperament and religious bent of mind, the junior Aidrus is better known as a prolific writer and poet of Arabic and as the author of many books, including 'Al-Nur al-Safir li Ahl al-Qarn al- 'Ashir,' which is an important source for the literary and cultural history of sixteenth-century Ahmadabad.

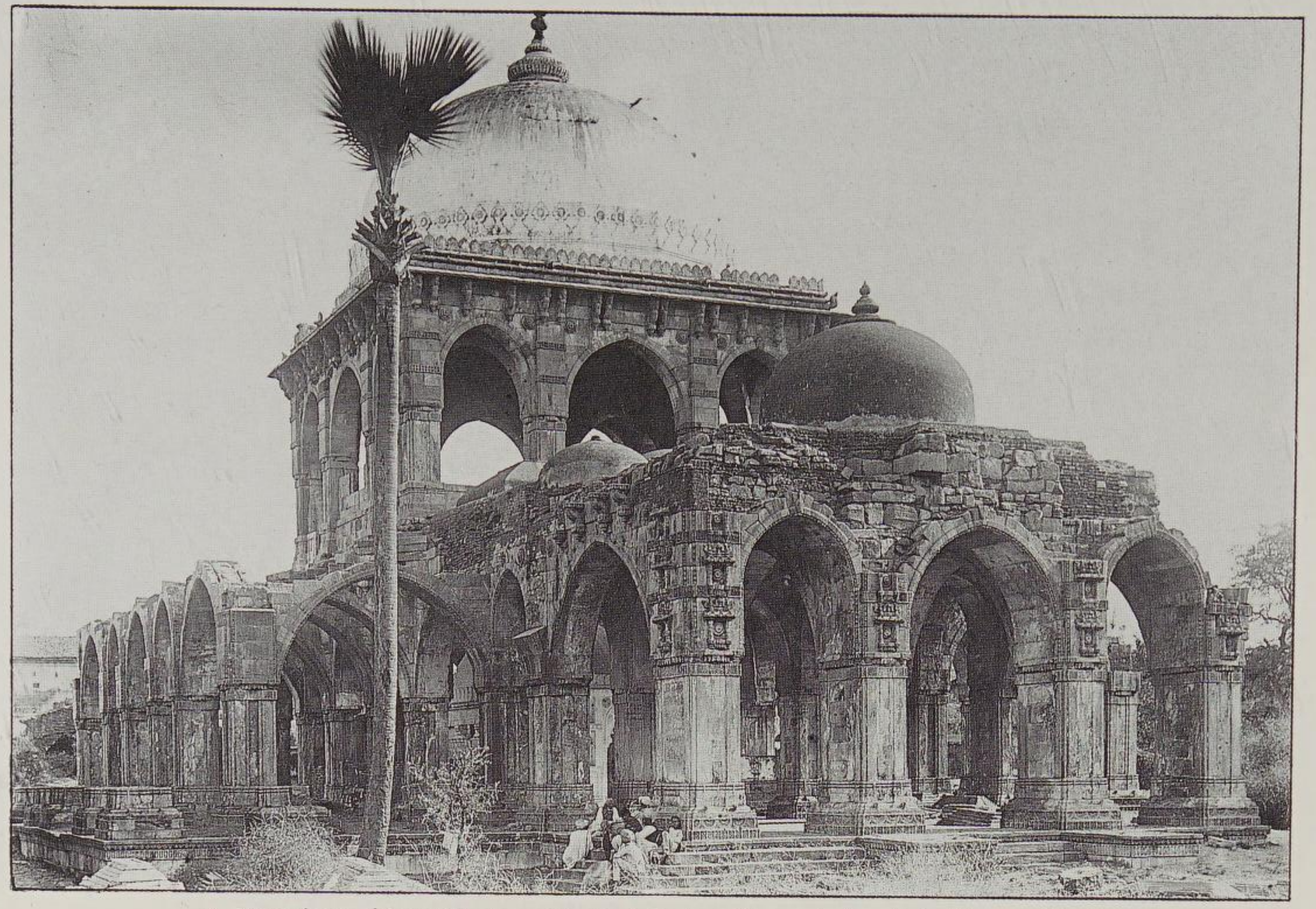
The dargah of Shah Abu Turab, a scion of the Salami Sayyid family of Shiraz, shot into fame at the time of Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1573. The Shah won Akbar's confidence, carrying on negotiations with the Gujarat nobles on behalf of the emperor. He was appointed the *amir-i hajj* by Akbar in 1578 and on his return brought back with him to Fatehpur Sikri the *qadam-i rasul*, which was reverently received by Akbar. The Shah brought this with him to Ahmadabad when he was appointed the *amin* of the province. The sacred relic was later on placed on his grave in a mausoleum which he had constructed during his lifetime. Situated in the old Asawal locality, to the south of the Calico Mills, his dargah stands on a high platform about 41 foot square, and consists of an outer arcaded chamber of three large and two small arched openings, and one inner one of three arched openings in each side. The entire structure is roofed by one central dome and eight smaller ones on the sides and corners. Built in arcuate style, it is quite pleasing in general design and form. The dargah seems to have been venerated chiefly on account of the qadam-i rasul, which was there until the middle of the eighteenth century, when it is stated to have been removed to the walled city during the insurgence of the Marathas. Later it is believed to have been shifted by the Mir's descendants to Cambay, to which place they belonged.

The dargah of Shah 'Abdul Wahhab, a saint of the Qadiri order, is situated in the Khanpur quarter of the city, not far from the dargah of Shah Wajihuddin. It consists of a central chamber covered by a dome through squinch-arch support instead of beams, and surrounded by a double colonnade roofed by smaller domes. It appears to have been originally quite an imposing structure. In the same

1. Mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmad Khattu. *Photo: Ebba M. Koch*

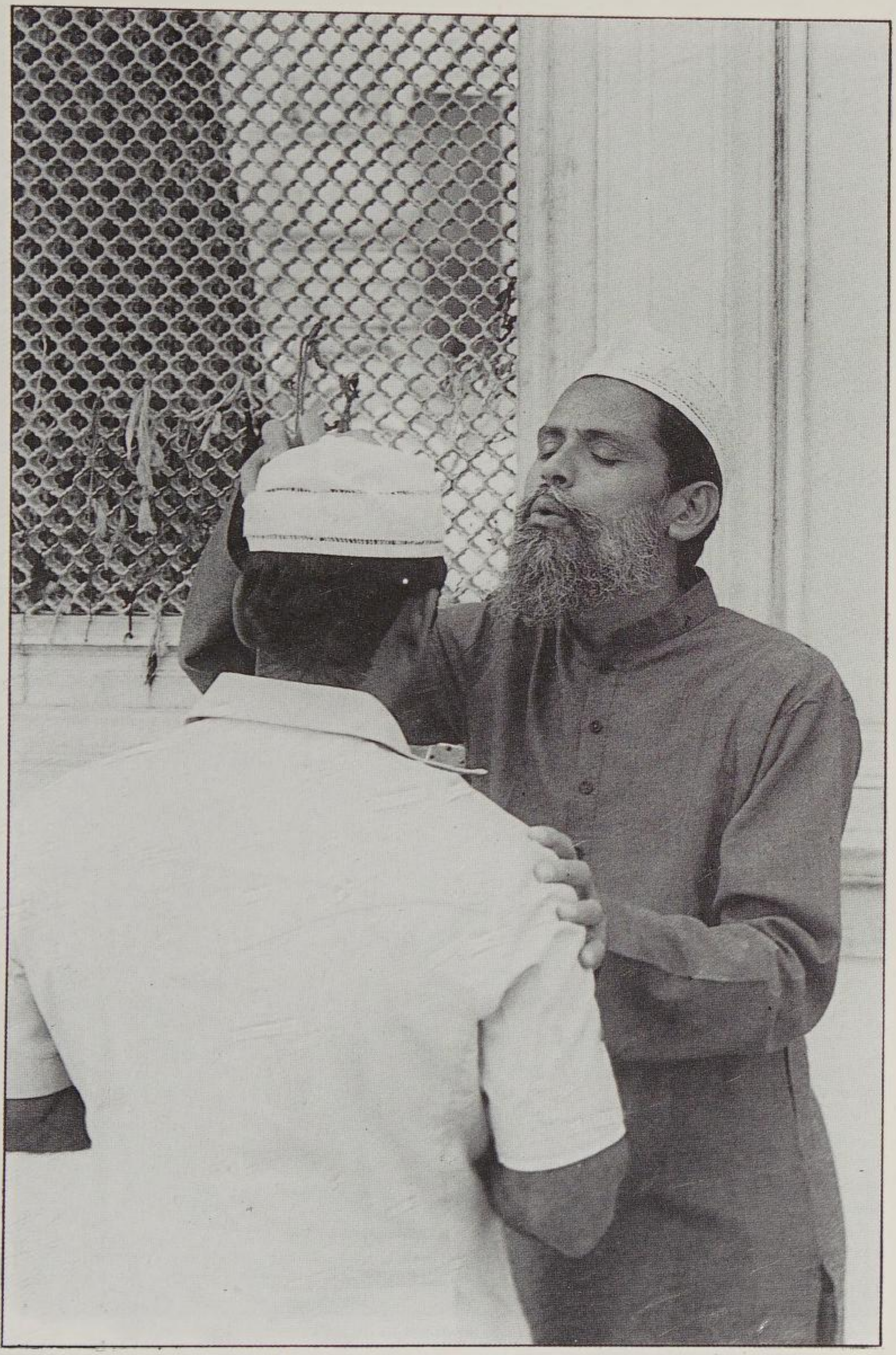


2. Mausoleum of Shah Alam. *Photo: Ebba M. Koch*

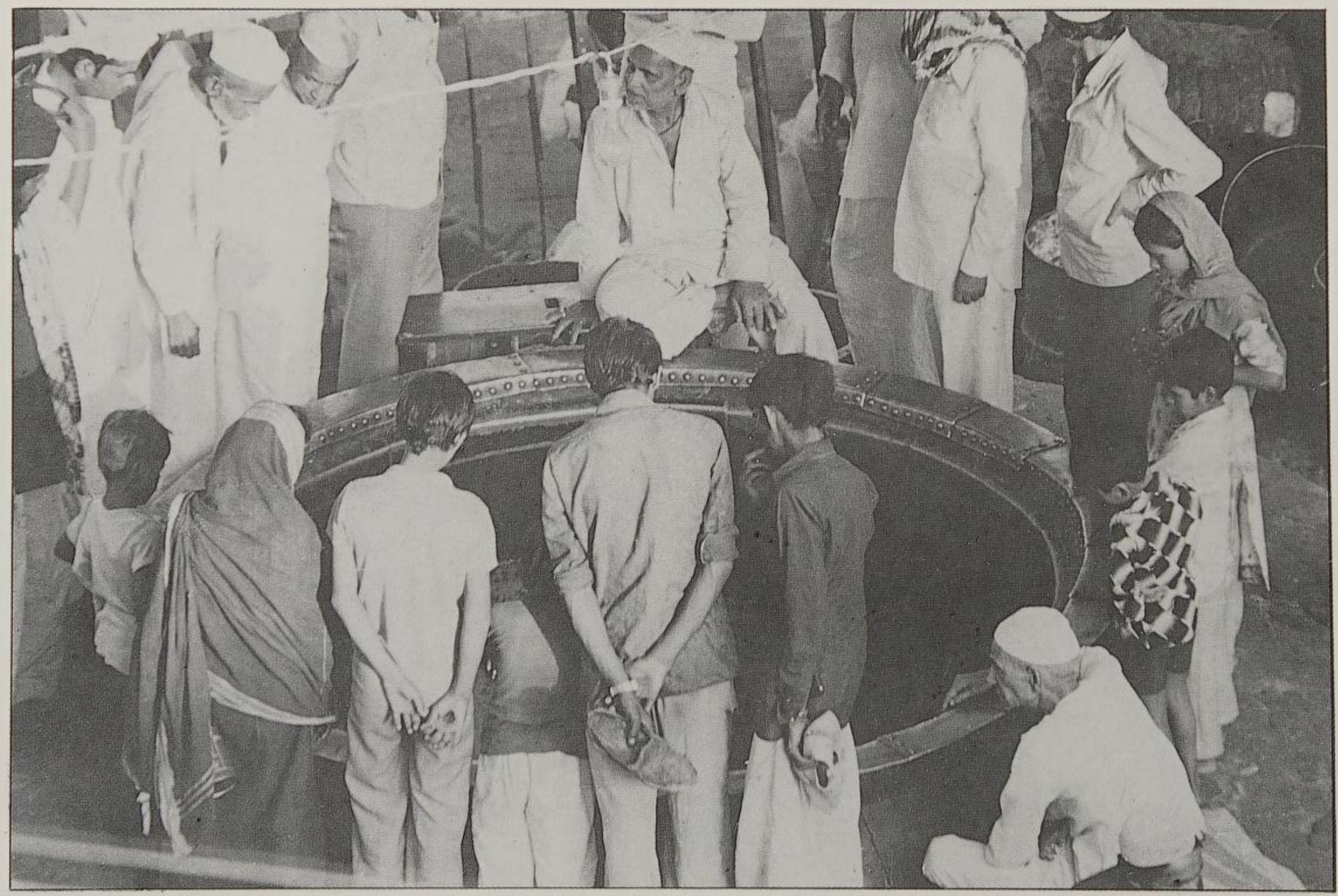


3. Mausoleum of Sayyid Burhanuddin Qutb-i Alam. *Photo: Archaeological Survey of India*

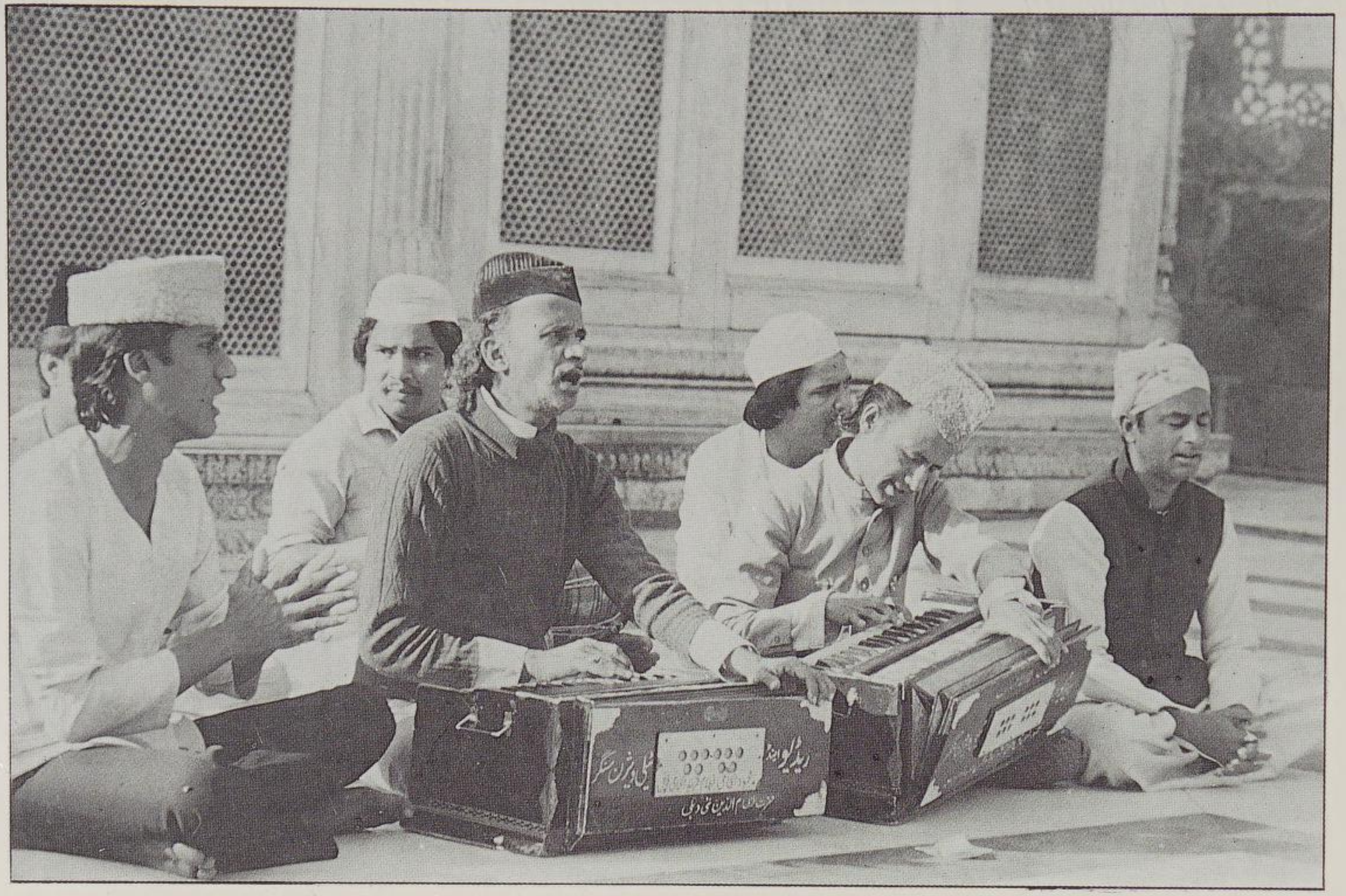
4. Offering the *chadar* at the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, New Delhi. *Photo: Desiderio Pinto*



5. The healing breath of the Pir. *Photo: Desiderio Pinto*



6. Pilgrims viewing the smaller *deg* at the dargah of Muin-ud-din Chishti, Ajmer. *Photo: Shalini Saran*

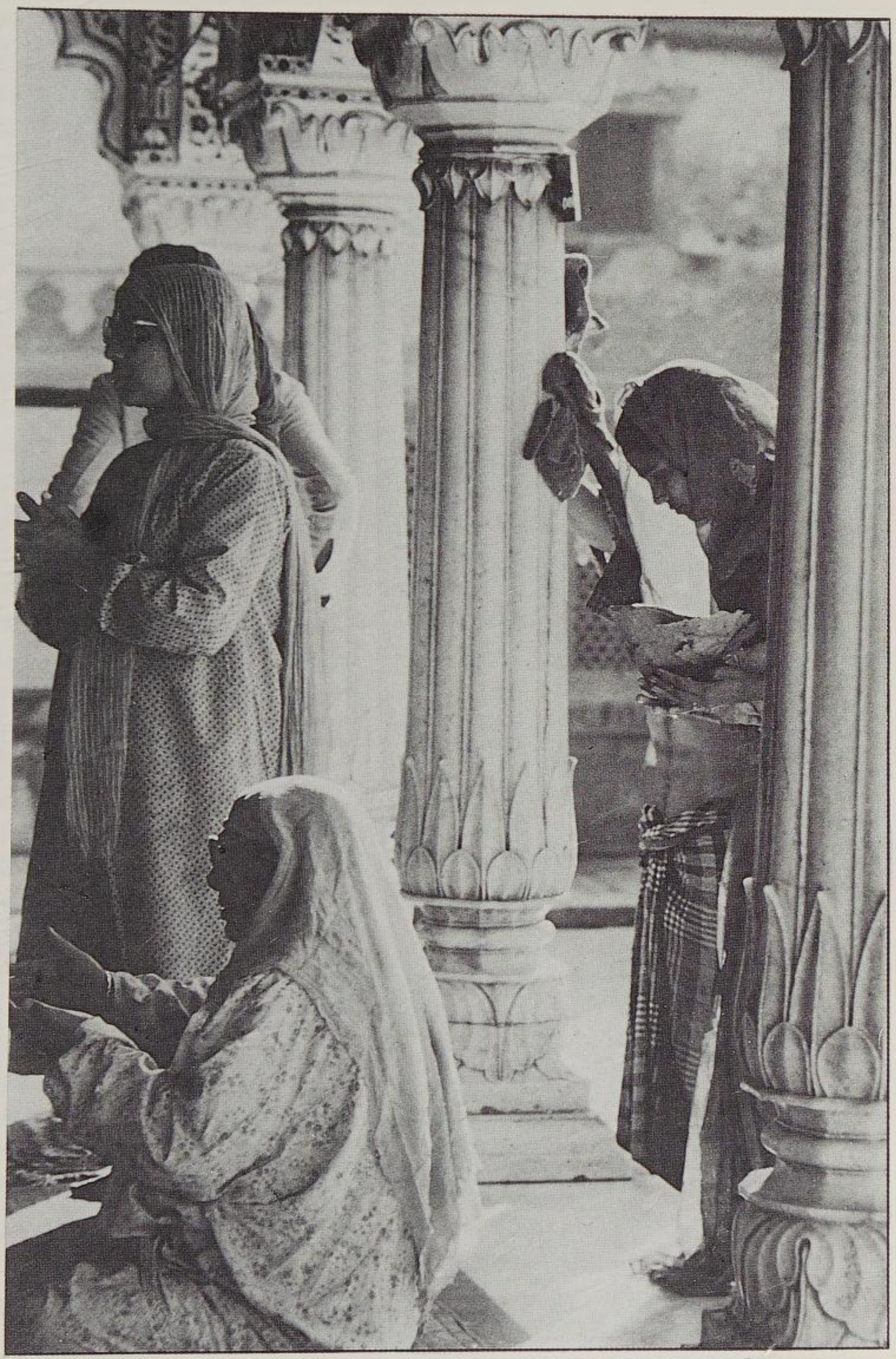


7. *Qawwals* at the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya. *Photo: Shalini Saran*

8. Pilgrims carrying the *chadar* to the shrine of Muin-ud-din Chishti, Ajmer. *Photo: Shalini Saran*

9. The *pankhawalla*, who fans pilgrims at dargahs. *Photo: Shalini Saran*

10. Pir and disciples, Ajmer. *Photo: Shalini Saran*



11. Offering prayers at the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya
Photo: Shalini Saran

12. A fakir blesses pilgrims with peacock feathers; they, in turn, drop coins into the *isfandi* container beside him, dargah Ajmer. *Photo: Shalini Saran*

enclosure is another tomb believed to have been that of his grandson Shah Ghiyathuddin. Now dilapidated, it must have been once a fine edifice. Not much is known about the saint but the tomb of Shah Ghiyathuddin is referred to in the inscription, which records the construction of a mosque in its premises in 1654 during the governorship of Prince Murad Bakhsh in the reign of Shah Jahan (r. 1627–58). The mosque has been recently reconstructed. The dargah is venerated and visited by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

To the east of the city, outside the city walls and beyond the railway station, are a group of rauzas. That of Baqir Shah, son of Imam Shah of Pirana, is a brick structure and is held in great respect by the followers of the Pirana sect. People come from considerable distances to pay homage there. The rauza of Pir Masha'ikh is in a sort of fortified enclosure and is a fine stone building with a verandah. Pir Masha'ikh was also a man of poetic talents and his poems in a local variety of Urdu are piously read by his disciples of the Momin or Momna community of Gujarat.

This survey of the dargahs of Ahmadabad will not be complete if mention is not made of various mausolea which, as at other places, are held in awe by large numbers of pilgrims. The saints of these dargahs were not members of any renowned family or propagators of any Sufi order. They were mostly men of position and wealth who occupied a high position in government and other fields of life. Some of them, after their retirement no doubt, seem to have taken to leading a life of seclusion and were, after their death, venerated by people as saints. The celebrated Gujarat nobleman Malik 'Imadul Mulk Sha'ban retired from the wazirship in 1461, after serving three sultans, and became a religious recluse. His fine rauza, which he had constructed in the garden besides the large tank—which he had also built in the Rakhyal locality on the eastern boundary of the city—was originally situated in a walled enclosure. It is an outstanding building in the tomb plan of the indigenous Gujarat style. Its double verandah, twenty foot deep, has massive double pillars at its outer edge and four at the corners, with shapely coupled columns. Of the nine open spaces in each side, the corner ones are joined with a lean-to balustrade (as in the well-preserved tomb of Rani Sabrai in the city), which indicates that some other later tombs, like that of Sayyid 'Uthman, were also originally so designed. Beautiful brackets springing from columns support the cornice, and the central chamber rises above the roof, pierced by

four stone-traceried windows, supporting a large beautiful dome. At the four corners are small domes. The Malik's dargah is also visited by people on Thursdays and on his death anniversary.

Another tomb in this category is that of Darya Khan, a prominent nobleman in the time of Mahmud Shah I. It is a massive brick structure with six and ten foot thick inner and outer walls. It is the largest of its kind in Gujarat and has the added distinction of being in a totally different architectural style. Its imposing and spacious square hall is roofed by a lofty and shapely central dome of pleasing proportions and outline, placed on a tall circular drum, and has a wide and fine domed verandah on each side pierced with tall arched openings. While historical works do not mention anything about Darya Khan's attitude to religion, a mid-sixteenth-century Gujarati Chishti saint of note is on record as saying that his uncle had initiated the Khan into discipleship in the Chishti order. Darya Khan's tomb is situated in the Shahibagh locality and is visited on Thursdays and other days by a large number of people in general, and by mentally disturbed people in particular, mostly women, who are brought there by their relatives in the hope of being cured. The annual 'urs, too, is well attended.

The tomb of A'zam Mu'azzam, believed to be the tomb of two brothers, is situated on the road to Sarkhej. It seems to have been originally part of a complex with a small pond to its west. Nothing is known about the religious beliefs of these two brothers, or whether they had any Sufi affiliation; they are believed to have flourished in the fifteenth century. Their tombs are considered dargahs, and consequently visited by pilgrims seeking relief from physical and mental ills. Architecturally the building is a massive square brick structure like the tomb of Darya Khan, with three arched openings, overlooking a vaulted verandah on the sides and roofed by a flattish large dome. Its most striking features are its round tapering turrets with domed tops at the four corners, in the late Tughlaq style of Delhi monuments.

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Perceptions of the Dargahs of Patna

PAUL JACKSON, S. J.

The dargahs of Patna constitute a multi-faceted world of their own. They are found from Maner, some twenty-five kilometres west of Patna, to Jethuli, about eighteen to the east. They reach back to the turn of the thirteenth century, serving as a reminder and an expression of their particular era. Collectively they record a span of almost seven centuries of Patna's more recent history. In turn, they have made their impact on that history.

The simplest way of conducting this survey is to make a pilgrimage to the dargahs, beginning with Maner in the west and ending with Jethuli in the east. The pilgrim can see the dargah—or *mazar*, if the structure is relatively simple—for himself. In actual fact people use either word, seemingly on the basis of familiarity rather than distinction. One can meet the attendant and enquire about the *pir*. One tell-tale indication of the likely nature of the response is the presence or otherwise of other tombs in the immediate vicinity. Such tombs are usually those of people closely associated with the pir and of those who expressed the wish to be buried near him. Once this procedure begins it usually continues. The essential point in the present context is that such tombs afford proof of the contemporary acknowledgement of the pir's sanctity. Hence one can expect some reliable historical information from the attendant, even if it is the barest minimum. Moreover, there is good reason to presume that more material is available, for example from the *khanqah* personnel, manuscripts, gazetteers and historians. On the other hand, the absence of nearby tombs should alert the pilgrim to make good use of his critical faculties and expect to hear something outlandish from the attendant. This general observation, however, does not militate against the existence of solitary mazars

of genuine Sufis. The pilgrim can also observe the rituals performed by devotees and, if so inclined, tactfully make enquiries about their purpose in visiting the dargah. One may also speak to people nearby in order to ascertain their perceptions of the pir. Any pilgrim turned researcher will then be obliged to go to the other sources mentioned.

MANER

The visitor to Maner—as well as the pilgrim—is confronted at the northern edge of a large, well-made tank with the imposing tomb of Shah Daulat (d. 1608), one of the successors of Shaikh Yahya Maneri, who himself lies in a humble tomb to the east of the tank. Anyone who has seen the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra Fort will have no difficulty recognizing the similarity of style. The edifice, built in *chunar* sandstone by Ibrahim Khan, governor of Bihar and a devotee of Shah Daulat, was completed in 1616. It is the only tomb from the Patna area featured in the *Archaeological Survey of India 1931 Report* covering Bihar and Orissa, and is referred to as 'perhaps the finest monument in the Province'.[1] To the puzzlement of some visitors, however, it is referred to locally as the Chhoti Dargah, while the rather nondescript tomb of Shaikh Yahya Maneri is referred to as the Bari Dargah. This judgement is based on spiritual and not material criteria, and reflects Yahya's spiritual eminence both in himself and on account of his son, Ahmad, who became better known as Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381, in Bihar Sharif). Babur, for example, made a point of visiting Yahya's tomb:

> As people said, 'The Son is near', we went to refresh ourselves on it. Masses of trees could be seen downstream. 'Munir (Maner) is there', said they, 'where the tomb is of Shaikh Yahya the father of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri.' It being so close, I crossed the Son, went 2 or 3 kurohs down it, traversed the Munir orchards, made a circuit of the tomb, returned to the Son bank, made ablution, went through the Mid-day Prayer before time, and made for camp.[2]

[1] M. H. Quraishi, *List of Ancient Monuments Protected under Act VII of 1904 in the Province of Bihar and Orissa* (Calcutta: Government of India, Central Publ. Branch, 1931), p. 62.

[2] *The Babur-nama in English*, transl. by A. S. Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1969), p. 666.

It is significant that Babur 'made a circuit of the tomb'. This is in imitation of the practice of pilgrims to Mecca who circumambulate, in an anti-clockwise direction, the Kaaba seven times. A short while ago I witnessed a group perform a circuit—they were content with one—around the tomb of Imam Shafi'i in Cairo, again in the traditional anti-clockwise direction. This is a common practice where the tomb is constructed in such a fashion as to render the practice feasible.

The local people who, standing on the west bank of the Son river on the morning of Wednesday, 27 April 1529, indicated the tomb of Yahya Maneri, also mentioned the chief reason for its importance, namely the fact that Yahya was the father of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri; the latter was then, as now, regarded as being Bihar's most eminent Sufi. His dargah is to be found in Bihar Sharif.

In his campaign against Husain Sharqi, Sultan Sikandar Lodi visited the tomb of Yahya Maneri in AH 901 (1495–6), but the chronicler mistakenly calls it the tomb of 'Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri', and this mistake is again made in a standard history of the period.[3]

An interesting, indirect confirmation of the importance of the dargah of Yahya Maneri occurred recently. On 8 January 1987, the Shah Sahib of the Dargah-i Ishq, Mitun Ghat, Patna, died. On the occasion of the fortieth day after his death his eldest son was installed as his successor, on 14 February. The invitation to this programme came from Faqir Inayatullah Firdausi, the Shah Sahib of Maner, and it was he who was the first to tie a turban on the head of the young successor, followed by all the Shah Sahibs, from near and far, who had gathered for the ceremony. The feast day (*'urs*) is celebrated on the 12th Sha 'ban.

A curious slip occurs in the brief report of Maner made by two Christian students of theology. They give the date of 1420 for the death of Yahya (in fact, a commonly accepted but incorrect date, for he had died by 1323) and call him the grandfather of Shah Daulat, whom they say died in 1608! Such questionable statements, both oral and written, are frequently made in connection with Sufis.

A critical and reflective perspective is needed also in examining a nearby mazar on the road to Ara. A certain Sayyid Ghulam Shah

[3] M. Habib & K. A. Nizami (eds.), *A Comprehensive History of India: The Delhi Sultanate*, vol. 5 (Delhi: People's Publishing House), 1970, p. 693.

is supposed to have been martyred during Jahangir's reign, but it was when a contractor began to build the road that blood supposedly oozed out; the martyr appeared to him in a dream and begged him to be left in peace. The contractor then built the mazar. The story bears all the marks of legend and its historical antecedents seem unlikely to be determined. As roadside mazars can be quite lucrative, one's suspicions are scarcely unjustified.

Danapur cantonment boasts a mazar of yet another martyr, Sayyid Mumtaz Shah, said to have been hanged about 1800. The story associated with this tomb is that some Hindu cowherds shut their cows inside the enclosure for three days during communal riots in 1942, intending to desecrate the place, but the cows miraculously maintained bowel and urine continence during these three days. This is how present-day devotion began. One would have to be excused for being more impressed by the ingenuity of the story than its veracity. There are other mazars in Danapur, one actually being inside a cinema house. This shows how reluctant people are, whether they be Muslims or Hindus, to interfere in any way with the tomb of putative holy men, and serves as added reason for doubting the previous story.

PHULWARI SHARIF

Phulwari Sharif lies a little to the west of Patna and to the south of Patna airport. When one reaches the dargah of the most famous of the saints buried here, Shah Muhammad Mujibullah Qadiri (d. 1777), it is abundantly clear that this man was venerated for his holiness, which time has only succeeded in enhancing, for there is a very large number of tombs in the vicinity. Before reaching the tomb of Shah Mujibullah one enters a large and impressive structure containing the tombs of three men and one woman. At the far end, separated by a wall and surmounted by a dome, is the tomb of Shah Mujibullah. I saw a small group of men praying beside the tomb, while one recited a portion of the Quran in a low voice. The structure surrounding the tomb itself was festooned with innumerable pieces of coloured string. The tying of each was accompanied by a petition to the saint. The men were from Calcutta, a reminder that many Muslims from Bihar have migrated there in search of work but have maintained their old spiritual links. It is also true that a

number of Sufis of Bihar have had disciples from what are now Bengal and Bangladesh, a tradition dating back to Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri in the fourteenth century. In addition to the dargah there are a khanqah and a *madrasa*—named after Mujibullah—attached. The Mujibiyya Madrasa still functions and is a reminder that Phulwari has produced a long line of learned men in addition to saintly personages.

Phulwari's history did not begin in the eighteenth century, however, for the sixteenth century saw the construction of a red sandstone mosque by Amir Ataullah Zainabi, the northern section of which was used as a madrasa bearing his name, the Zainabiyya Madrasa. Buchanan noticed this in 1811: 'These three families keep Madrïsahs, one of which is in a Mosque fronted with stone and in a very different style of architecture from any that I have seen.'[4] While this particular madrasa heads the list of important madrasas in seventeenth-century Bihar,[5] it is evident that the Phulwari madrasas of today do not score so highly. Nevertheless, one does meet accomplished young teachers of calibre, one of whom is Hilal Ahmad Sahib.

Most people who take the trouble to visit the dargah of Shah Mujibullah would not like to leave Phulwari Sharif without calling on the Sajjada Nashin Sahib. He meets people in a special, inner room at 11.45 a.m. The pilgrims from Calcutta were there, as also some others, but only the men. (As some ladies were seen at the tomb, it is possible that there is a different time and place for meeting them.) What strikes one is the impressive appearance and business-like manner of the Shah Sahib. The whole set-up, etiquette and manner of proceeding was reminiscent of the Mughal darbar, somewhat anachronistic but reflective of the historically conditioned imitative Sufi organizational set-up—as the common term 'Shah Sahib' testifies. The needs of the majority of petitioners involved some ailment or other and were swiftly met with a hastily scribbled charm (*ta'wiz*) to be worn around the throat. This Arabic word means 'praying for protection; causing to take refuge with', and one could argue the case for a ta'wiz presented in a holier atmos-

[4] V. H. Jackson (ed.), *Journal of Francis Buchanan of Patna and Gaya (1811–12)* (Patna: Superintendent, Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, 1925), p. 6.

[5] N. Kumar, *Image of Patna* (Patna: Bihar District Gazetteers, 1971), p. 74.

phere, perhaps after prayers, instead of in the impersonal haste of a supermarket checkout point. One poor man reported that his small son had been missing for several months. This news was met with a dismissive gesture and an abrupt 'Go!,' followed by an afterthought—'I'll pray for him.'

There is an historical puzzle associated with Phulwari Sharif. To the left of the road leading north from Phulwari is a mazar which is reputed to be that of Minhajuddin Rasti, and a sign claims that he died in AH 787 i.e. 1385. The Mujibiyya Madrasa people claim that he was the first to come to Phulwari and that there were many religious scholars, jurists and Qazis among his descendants. They also claim he was a Syed, and a disciple of Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381). It is known that there was a considerable population of Muslims in Maner to the west and in Jethuli to the east, from the thirteenth century, so it is not improbable that a wandering dervish settled there in the fourteenth. The absence of any historical record, in addition to the isolated nature of the grave, and the inability to name any of his reputedly famous offspring, all militate against the veracity of the claim. Local perception has him coming from Medina which, interpreted realistically, indicates unknown origins. Nevertheless, local people do come to seek his blessings, as a group of sisters who have opened a school nearby spontaneously mentioned. It was they who mentioned the tomb of a female saint just outside Phulwari on the way back to Patna. This is Bibi Jamal—according to the local attendant—who wandered there from Ajmer, but was captured by dacoits. The earth swallowed her up and thus her honour was preserved. All the factors—a single grave, an outlandish story, and a roadside situation—point to the obvious conclusion.

PATNA

Immediately to the east of the High Court is the mazar of a reputed martyr, Syed Ghulam Safdar. He is reputed to have come from Arabia some six centuries ago in order to spread the faith, but was killed. A rather garrulous faqir sat in front of the entrance to the tomb compound, very neatly kept. He had some very definite notions which he expounded in answer to some simple questions that were designed to elicit what factual information was available.

For example, the answer to the query about who had killed the martyr was, 'The names of the slayers of martyrs are not known.' This was scarcely enlightening, and by no means a universal truth. An exasperated 'Go to the Imarat-i Shari'at in Phulwari Sharif!' was not of much help either.

A group gathered, including a man with a very kindly face covered by a luxuriant beard who had been saying his evening prayer inside the compound. An interesting discussion about Sufism ensued. In the mean time the keeper arrived. When some questions on the history of the place were put to him he frankly confessed his ignorance. He made no attempt to relate the story, told by others, of how the wall being built around the High Court compound kept falling down each night—a 'fact' unrecorded by O'Malley in his Gazetteer—and that the saint appeared in a dream to the contractor who thereupon built the dargah. The 'urs is celebrated with an all-night programme on the 16th Rabi'ul-awwal, a fact well known to the sisters and hostellers of the nearby Patna Women's College.

Near Bans Ghat is another mazar which is supposed to contain the severed head of Syed Ghulam Safdar. According to the keeper there he is known as Maneri Baba, as he hails from Maner. The keeper was a well-spoken man who was 'doing his best' to ensure that his shrine found its place in the sun. He was a little vague about historical matters and suggested a trip to the khanqah in Maner where 'all your questions would be answered'. Having heard, in silence, the Shah Sahib dilate on how Sharafuddin Maneri had miraculously remained rooted to one spot for twelve years, in no need of normal bodily functions, I did not jump at this suggestion. The encounter was, however, a pleasant one.

The area west of Gandhi Maidan is known as Chhajjubagh after Shah Chhajju, who is buried there. A family group was praying there in the afternoon when I called. I enquired whether the gentleman had been praying for something in particular. He said that he sometimes did, but on this occasion he was simply praying with his family members. With regard to historical information I was referred to Faruq Sahib, who would come from Sadaquat Ashram at about 6.30 p.m. I returned and found Faruq Sahib seated near the shrine while a lady was engaged in prayer. According to him, Shah Chhajju came from Arabia hundreds of years previously. He had a smattering of knowledge about Sufis and Sufism which was probably enough to impress his normal clients, but not a profes-

sional researcher. He was in no way affiliated with any Sufi silsila. The evidence points to the correctness of Professor Syed Hasan Askari's assertion that he was a gardener. His 'urs is celebrated on the 13th and 14th of Rabi'ul-Awwal.

Close by is the tomb of a man of a vastly different background, a prominent figure in the history of Bihar, being one of its governors during the time of Aurangzeb. He is Baz Bahadur Shah, and his tomb lies atop an elevated mound off Bank Road. He is remembered with musical programmes on the 8th and 9th of Rabi'ul-Awwal. A woman looks after the tomb. There are more mazars close by, one next to the District Magistrate's residence, of a man, Tippu Sultan Shah, supposedly martyred during the time of the British; and that of a woman, Chunni Bibi, near the bus-stand for buses to the north of the Ganga.

The next important mazar is that of Mirza Murad Shah, in the premises of Patna Medical College Hospital in Muradpur, taking its name from that of the saint. He was the son of the last governor of Bihar under Jahangir, Mirza Rustam Safawi, and was himself the military commander (*faujdār*) before embracing the Sufi path. A card game was in progress on the plinth of the mazar, and the attendant was sleeping inside when I called.

There is a Pir Bahore police station next to the Bankipore post office and a *muhalla* (*mahalla*) named after the same man to the south of Ashok Raj Path, opposite the university library. The tomb is situated in the mosque. Nobody was praying there when I entered. I was directed to a shopkeeper nearby. When asked about the saint's history, he replied: "What do I know? The mazar was there when I was born." This simple answer was illuminating, for it highlights a fact that is so obvious that it can be missed, namely that the mazar itself is part of the very environment into which the local people are born. They accept its presence and whatever 'story' is associated with it, just as they accept the fact of their own parents.

Opposite the Mahendru post office is a small mazar which I have seen countless times as I cycle past. Almost every evening some people can be observed inside the enclosure. The attendant is a businesslike man, ready to oblige but not to waste too much time. He affirmed that the saint, Bhanwar Shah, had come from the West more than six centuries ago, and was a Chishti, both claims being impossible to substantiate. The striking feature of this small mazar is its functional aspect. It is situated right beside an incredibly

busy, narrow neck of Ashok Raj Path, a bottleneck often jammed with tooting vehicles. The people in the mazar seem oblivious to all this, being lost in prayer. For them the reality of the mazar as a sacred place far overrides its actual physical setting. It is a beautiful example of how, in the midst of the hurly-burly of life, it is quite possible to establish a sacred space. The analogy with small, wayside temples is immediately apparent. It is a place where poor people, especially, can find God close at hand in the symbolic presence of the mortal remains of one of His great servants.

Immediately to the south of Patthar ki Masjid, on a road running parallel to Ashok Raj Path called Dargah Road, and joined by a road of the same name, lies the most imposing dargah in Patna proper, that of Shah Arzan. Very likey the elevated area where the dargah is situated marks the site of some Buddhist ruins. While there are clear signs of a contemporary reputation for holiness—the grandeur of the tomb and, even more importantly, the presence of many other tombs in the area—there is also evidence of neglect. In the open area, itself dotted with tombs, one finds boys playing cricket, goats grazing, and a general air of untidiness. The behaviour of the keeper left a great deal to be desired. Instead of attracting people to the dargah it would have driven the ordinary person away. Hence it was a pleasant surprise to find the mausoleum containing the tomb was quite neat and tidy and the tomb itself well cared for, with evidence of many visitors in the form of small, coloured pieces of string tied as a memento of a prayer or a wish.

As the keeper seemed averse to civil converse, and the Shah Sahib was out, a few questions were put to the worthies who gathered knowingly around. 'Shah Arzan came from Medina, via Baghdad.' 'Did he leave any writing behind?' 'Yes, in Persian.' There seemed no point in continuing beyond pleasantries, for Shah Arzan was an Afghan who wrote in Pashto. He died in 1619. His 'urs is celebrated on 3rd Dhu'l-Hijja. In addition to the dargah and surrounding tombs there is a khanqah. O'Malley gives some interesting information:

> Attached to the shrine is a large Khanqah or monastic institution having endowments granted by Farrukhsiyar and Shah Alam; it possesses landed property in Patna, Saran and Muzaffarpur. According to the canons of the institution, the office of the Sajjada-nashin or superior is elective, the Sajjada-nashins of the various Khanqahs in the district

assembling to elect a successor from among his celibate disciples.[6]

O'Malley wrote in 1907. It is easy to see the impact of the 1951 Act abolishing the zamindari system. 'Neglect' is the word that springs to mind. The method of choosing the Sajjada Nashin is also most interesting. Normally, the office is hereditary, and this has now become the practice. Quite close to the dargah is the terminal point of the Muharram procession where the *ta'zias* are taken for burial. A huge concourse gathers to celebrate this event.

PATNA CITY

Mitun Ghat is the site of two dargahs, together with some tombs and a khanqah, as well as a remarkable mosque. The mosque is situated close to the tomb of Shah Mun'im Pak and is noted for its underground chamber. Mun'im Pak was taught by Maulana Shah Farhad of Delhi and sent to Patna by his *khalifa*, Shah Asadullah. The saint was remarkable for his spirit of detachment, extending even to embracing a life of celibacy, as had done Shah Arzan. He had no grant or source of income and lived in utter simplicity. Even the land on which the handsome khanqah now stands was purchased from a Dutch lady in 1848. Insteadof leaving children behind to perpetuate his name, he contented himself with leaving two works in Persian on mystical themes, 'Ilhamat-i Mun'ami' and 'Mukashafat-i Mun'ami', when he died in 1771. He was succeeded by a disciple and the succession then continued in the normal fashion, but the spirit of detachment remained. The property, for example, was purchased, and the present Shah Sahib, Salimuddin Ahmad, is kept very busy attending to the needs of the people who come in considerable numbers to see him. On the morning of my visit I was impressed by the neatness and tidiness of the whole compound. There was a considerable crowd of people waiting to be attended to. What struck me was not the fact that the majority of the people were women—that can be a common experience—but that there were several who seemed very well-off. Their presence was an indication of the general esteem in which the Shah Sahib is held. There

[6] L. S. S. O'Malley, *Patna Gazetteer*, revised edition 1907 (Patna: Superintendent, Government Printing, Bihar and Orissa, 1924), p. 193.

seems little doubt that the combination of medical and spiritual treatment afforded in such a kindly fashion in such salubrious surroundings, with a beautiful vista opening out to the river beyond, proves quite effective in many instances. It is also heartening that the Shah Sahib's son, Shamimuddin is busily engaged in research at the Khuda Bakhsh Library.

Separated by a large building to the east lies another Sufi, Shah Rukh-i 'Alamuddin 'Ishq, who came after Shah Mun'im Pak. A feature of his dargah is that the succeeding Sajjada Nashin Sahibs lie buried in a line behind their renowned ancestor. The last one died very recently. The ceremony of the installation of his son and successor, the *dastār-bandī*, for which Sufis gathered from near and far, has been referred to. The saint died in 1778 and left behind a collection of poems, Diwan-i 'Ishq. There is a large khanqah here also, with a vista towards the Ganga.

Across the road from this establishment is found a single tomb within a sizeable domed structure. Nobody seemed to know who was buried there. Finally, one person said a Shi'ite holy man was buried there. This was an interesting and telling contrast to the general phenomenon, where even the humblest of mazars contains a figure known to the people round about.

Khwaja Kalan is an old quarter of Patna, with a mazar—that of Pir Latif Shah—close to the police station, and two more, brother and sister, in the police station itself. There is also the dargah of Syed Hasan Ali Harani, who died in 1809, in an alley called Taksal, but nobody knows exactly who the Khwaja himself was.

A huge wholesale area lies immediately to the west of Patna Ghat railway station. It is known as Marufganj after Pir Ma'ruf, who lies buried at its western extremity. Little is known about him.

The opposite is true when one travels about a hundred metres east of the Patna Ghat railway station, past the house and tomb of the Dutchman Jorgen Hendrich Berner (d. 1790), to the mosque and tomb of Pir Damariya. The mosque was ordered to be constructed under Jahangir but was completed under Shah Jahan. To the east of the mosque lies the tomb of Pir Damariya, while a khanqah lies to the north-west. An old keeper is found there with his family nowadays, and the whole place has a decidedly dilapidated look about it. The keeper complained that people came only on the occasion of the 'urs, said some prayers, had a good meal, and that was

that. In subsequent discussions with the absent Shah, Ja'far Sahib, it was openly stated that the abolition of the zamindari system, legislated in 1951 and executed in 1954 and 1956, deprived the khanqah of its source of income and, as a result, there was no way the family could maintain it, especially as they did not wish to live there. And yet the whole complex, with the affirming presence of adjacent tombs, not to mention the mosque and khanqah, is magnificently situated on raised ground, to the east of which lies, at a lower level, the lush land adjacent to the Ganges. Standing near the tomb one experiences an illusion of height and a sense of vast, open spaces scarcely found anywhere else in Patna. The name 'Damariya' was given to Syed Hasan, an eminent Sufi of the Suhrawardi *silsila*, who lies buried in Hasanpura in Siwan. He would not accept more than a *damri*—the hundredth part of a repee—as a gift from anyone. He was held in high esteem by Humayun. Syed Hasan had an elder son, Syed Ahmad, who lies buried in Jaruha, Hajipur, while his younger son, Syed Husain, lived and died in Bhagalpur (1565). Syed Ahmad's son, Syed Muhammad, came to Patna and is the Pir Damariya buried there. He refused all grants but his attendant accepted one on the orders of Jahangir. It was handed over to his son on his death in 1644. Both the Patna and Bhagalpur Damariya descendants flourished, but there was an attempted take-over which ended up in a case before the Privy Council. Ja'far Sahib's younger brother, Asghar Sahib, a highly reputed lawyer in the Patna High Court, commented on how unedifying it was for the Damariya descendants to be squabbling in this fashion, given the origins of their name.

JETHULI

About eighteen kilometres east of Patna lies the village of Jethuli, famous for the tomb, on the northern side of the road to Bakhtiyarpur, of Shihabuddin Jagjot. He was a member of the Suhrawardi silsila and is famous both in his own right and as being the maternal grandfather of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381), Bihar's most illustrious Sufi, through the marriage of his daughter, Bibi Razia, to Yahya Maneri. His other daughter, Bibi Kamalo, established a reputation for sanctity in Kako, in Gaya district, where she lies buried.

REFLECTIONS

This paper deals with perceptions of dargahs, and perceptions are influenced by the conditioning of the person who perceives, as well as the circumstances of the perceiving. Both the value and the limitations of this approach will be clear from the account presented. It is also necessary to mention that many more less important mazars exist in and around Patna, and that it was not possible, nor seemed desirable, to visit and comment on all of them.

It is very clear that there are two foci of Islamic religious life in and around Patna—mosques and dargahs (including mazars). The mosque is where the formal, communitarian gatherings take place, whereas the dargah is the preferred place for individual or family outings, except for the occasion of the 'urs celebration. On this occasion a very large or local group gathers for prayers and a social celebration in the form of a *mela* and, not infrequently, a musical programme. This is more distinctively Indian in ethos than the formal prayer in the mosque setting, and large numbers of Hindus are attracted to and participate in the celebrations. They too can be found at the dargahs, but it is obviously rare to come across a Hindu in a mosque. Thus it can be said that while the mosque distinguishes and separates Muslims from Hindus, the dargah often tends to bring them together. No one can belittle this function in the present circumstances.

Both mosque and dargah present a record of the centuries and the impact made by Muslims in and around Patna. It is noticeable that the dargah preceded the mosque in this respect. Moreover, a number of localities are named after the Pir Sahib buried there—Pir Bahore, Marufganj, Muradpur, Chhajju Bagh, etc.—a distinction not accorded to mosques. Hence dargahs have a greater impact on the local populace.

Another feature is that the Sufis and Pir Sahibs came among the people not with political or economic power, but only with the prestige of their reputation as devotees of God. In many instances, such men put themselves at the service of the people. It was the common people who conferred greatness upon them, not an accident of birth.

While Patna does not lack pirs eminent for their sanctity, some of the smaller dargahs seem dubious to the professional historian. But the local people are very accepting in their attitude, and are naturally

undisturbed about praying at such shrines. If the attendants have a modicum of knowledge and are blessed with a courteous manner, poor people confide in them and receive some solace.

The abolition of the zamindari system in 1951 had more of an impact on the khanqahs, which were dependent on zamindari revenues, than on the dargahs. However, the dargahs were not entirely unaffected by this change.

In conclusion it could be pointed out that, in the changing social conditions of independent India, the real challenge is being posed to the people in the khanqahs and to the attendants at the dargahs. In a climate of polarization it is the mosque which will increasingly become the one and only focal point of Muslims, unless the men associated with the dargahs—the attendants and Shah Sahibs—shoulder the twin responsibility of deepening their own knowledge and practice of Islamic spirituality as well as their social responsibilities. They have a fund of goodwill, but this will be eroded unless they imitate, not merely pay lip service to, the great men of the past with whom they are associated.

The Mystery of the Nizamuddin Dargah: The Accounts of Pilgrims

DESIDERIO PINTO, S. J.

PROLOGUE

One approach in the social sciences attempts to explain the experience of people in terms of categories of which the people themselves may not be conscious. Religion, for instance, has been explained in terms of its functional importance to social integration (Durkheim), or in terms of maintaining the status quo (Marx). The present study attempts to look at subjective experience and its meaning to those who participate in the rituals of the Nizamuddin dargah. This approach made it difficult to pursue research with the conventional methods of data collection, namely dispassionate survey and interview methods. It became necessary to employ a different methodology by which empathy with the experiences of the respondents was important. In a sense, the methodology drew its inspiration from the Weberian tradition of *Verstehen* (an interpretive approach). The respondents' initial reticence to talk about their intimate experiences and feelings was slowly overcome by repeated efforts to establish a meaningful rapport by attempting to win them over as friends. Subsequently, they made themselves

* My first debt is to the pilgrims, pirs and pirzade of the Nizamuddin dargah who allowed me to study them and their dargah. The second debt is to Mohammed Talib, who initiated me into the methods of research with support and encouragement. Finally, I am indebted to C. W. Troll for moral and intellectual support. The opinions expressed in this paper are my own. The material was gathered during field-work in the Nizamuddin dargah, Delhi, between April 1985 and February 1986.

available for longer discussions on their experiences in the dargah, the relevance of the saint and his dargah to their lives, the loss of purposefulness that the dargah had restored.

The word 'mystery' in the title of this essay is used in the sense of something which is present or confronts one and yet is ever distant. It is not something persons can master, but that which persons let themselves be grasped by. Therefore, it is something that retains its character as mystery even though it reveals itself to persons.[1]

INTRODUCTION

Thousands of people from different parts of India and other countries, backgrounds, classes and even religions visit the Nizamuddin dargah regularly every year. Muslims are the largest group of visitors, Hindus coming next, followed by Sikhs, and occasionally a few Christians. Most of them come to pray at the tombs of Hazrat Nizamuddin (1239–1325) and his disciple, Amir Khusrau, which are a few hundred feet from each other. After paying their respects to the saints—first at the tomb of Amir Khusrau, since he is believed to serve as the gate-keeper of the dargah, and then at the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin—a considerable number of visitors meet their *pirs* (spiritual directors), who claim to be descendants of Hazrat Nizamuddin and who sit either at the shrines or in their respective offices built along the wall of the dargah. However, some people (they are so few as to be hardly noticeable) come only to visit the pirs, paying their respects at the tombs only to please them.

Aware of the harsh criticism directed against the dargah and its practices by orthodox Muslims—it is considered unIslamic and a falsification of the teachings of Islam—it is worth wondering why Muslims of all classes (though the poor are preponderant) continue to visit the dargah regularly. I have even found people who, while officially criticizing the dargah, pray at the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin. Visiting and praying at tombs, especially of holy people, is by no means a recent Islamic phenomenon. It is, as some *pirżade* (custodians of the dargah) proudly relate, an ancient one practised all over the Muslim world, and goes back to the example

[1] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, tr. William V. Dych (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1978), pp. 44–86.

set by Prophet Muhammad himself. The Nizamuddin dargah forms part of this tradition and, according to some of the pirzade, has never been bereft of pilgrims.

PETITIONERS AND SEEKERS OF MATERIAL FAVOURS

At first I was led to believe, both by the pirzade and the pilgrims themselves, that people come to the dargah mainly to acquire something, be it from God through the intercession of the saint, or from the saint who is seen as God's representative, or from the pirs and pirzade who, because they are related to the saint through blood ties, are perceived as possessing spiritual power or influence over the saint.

It is true that pilgrims come to the dargah with all kinds of petitions and requests. Those who find it difficult to communicate verbally with the saint write out their petitions on pieces of paper which they tie to the grilled walls surrounding the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin. Others tie strings and pieces of cloth torn from their clothing to the grilled wall of the shrine to remind the saint of their requests and themselves of their commitment to feed or clothe the poor of the dargah as soon as their requests have been granted. A sampling of some typical petitions, which cover a wide range, is provided in the following paragraphs.

Some pilgrims seek cures beyond the competence of ordinary doctors; for instance, a pirzada told me of a cancer patient who, after sitting at the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin for three months, praying and eating nothing but the rose petals strewn regularly by pilgrims on the tomb, was cured of the illness. On the other hand, many do not go to a doctor at all and seek cures for the most ordinary illnesses: skin irritations, boils and common colds. Others come to prevent the recurrence of a calamity in their lives. For instance, one forty-year-old man told me that seven brothers and sisters before him were still-born. Fearing that he too would be still-born, his parents came and prayed at the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin. Thankful for sparing their eighth child's life, his parents became annual pilgrims. The son continues visiting the dargah every six months, even though he lives in Calcutta. A Hindu woman told me she has been visiting the dargah for the last thirty years to ensure that her only surviving child continues to live.

A few pilgrims come to beseech to bring about a favourable verdict in court cases they are fighting. I once met one such person feeding as many beggars as he could find at a nearby restaurant. He told me that a relative had tried to rob him of his ancestral house. On filing a case to regain possession of the house, he had come to pray at the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin. Now that the saint had granted his request and given his home back to him, he had returned to the dargah and, having thanked the saint verbally, was now expressing his gratitude in action by feeding the poor who, he said, 'come to the saint for food'.

Some people are brought to the dargah by family members, well-wishers and friends to be exorcised from evil jinns or spirits. I was told of a woman who, because she was possessed by a jinn, had withdrawn completely into herself. She was brought by force to the shrine of Amir Khusrau where she began to wail and hit her head on the grilled marble wall of the shrine. After much prayer and supplication to the saint by the people who had brought her, the jinn left her and she returned to her normal self. Another woman told me that Hazrat Nizamuddin, after repeated prayers to him at his shrine, had driven out a jinn who had haunted her house, giving her and her family immense trouble.

A note attached to the grilled wall of the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin read: 'Bring back my wife who has run away, deserting our children and myself.' An old woman told me that her husband and son were always at loggerheads with each other, making the home an impossible place. The father constantly suspected the son of being on drugs, and the son, while protesting his innocence, accused the father of wasting his money on adulterous liaisons. On the advice of a friend who regularly visits the dargah, she began to pray regularly to Hazrat Nizamuddin, visiting the dargah whenever she found time. As the months went by, she found them tolerating each other, becoming eventually friendly with each other.

An elderly man told me he could not keep a job for any length of time. 'Finally', he said,

> I decided to come to Delhi and pray at the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin, hoping that he would solve my problem. Consequently, I got a job at one of the restaurants near the dargah. Little problems that arise during the normal course of work and which earlier made me leave other jobs began to disappear. At last, I found I could hold a job. And I have kept this one for the last ten years.

THE ROLE OF THE PIRS AND PIRZADE

Besides organizing the feasts, maintaining the dargah and the peace within it so that people can pray, the pirs and pirzade claim to have spiritual powers of their own, if not on account of personal holiness, then because they are blood relatives of the saint and have been handed down these powers generation after generation. They guide the pilgrims and visitors as to the manner in which they should pray, trying to turn half-hearted Muslims into fervent ones, and leading to their God those who belong to other faiths. One pir said, 'People of all faiths are loved here. A different religion is no barrier since all people are the same in the eyes of the saint. Because there is one God, all people are one. The saint acts as God acts, treating all people equally, whatever their faith or status—all people are equal here.' The pirs effect cures and miracles through *ta'wizes* (amulets), which are prayers, more often verses from the Quran, usually written but sometimes recited, on various materials which are either worn, drunk, burnt or eaten by the pilgrims. One woman had taken a *ta'wiz* from one of the pirs because her husband, a captain in the army, was listed as missing during the Bangladesh war. A month after she had taken the ta'wiz her husband returned to her after escaping from a prisoner-of-war camp. Another time I met a Hindu who had been brought by a Muslim to one of the pirs of the dargah because it was believed that he was possessed by a jinn who threw him into fits and who would make him run away from home for days on end. The pir to whom he was taken recited some verses of the Quran on some drinking water. Rose petals from the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin and Amir Khusrau were immersed in this and he was asked to drink that water every morning and evening.

The pirs and pirzade are also approached for advice on all kinds of problems, both spiritual and mundane, and for monetary help. One poor Hindu who had just come to Delhi lost his five-year-old daughter in a road accident. One afternoon, when I was present, he approached the pirzade for help to release her corpse from the police morgue, and for money to conduct the funeral rites. To please the pirzade he even offered to have her buried like a Muslim. The pirzade told him to cremate her as per his Hindu custom and promised to pay all the expenses so incurred. Then they sent one of their own men to help him get the corpse released and to arrange the funeral.

PILGRIMS AND DEVOTEES ON A SPIRITUAL QUEST

Quite early in my interviews I found people who, contrary to the information I was given earlier, visited the dargah on a regular basis, some once a week, others every four or five hours, or every day, without the intention of acquiring anything from the saints, the pirs and pirzade. As my interviews progressed, I found this group of people formed the majority. In due course I realized that these people had not always belonged to this group. In most cases they visited the dargah initially on the advice of friends or well-wishers to find a solution to pressing problems, and hence belonged to the first category. For instance, one man told me that before he began visiting the dargah he suffered from cirrhosis of the liver. For one year he went from one doctor to another, seeking a cure, but without success. Finally, a friend advised him to go to Nizamuddin saying,

> Do not ask these doctors to cure you. Ask God to cure you, for only he can truly cure. Even doctors try to cure through his power. Go to the saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. He has a power within himself given him by God, and that power is meant to be used even for your benefit.

The man said he came to the dargah, prayed to the saint, and was eventually cured. A poor man told me he had initially come to the dargah with his body covered with sores, which made life unbearable. He said, 'I do not believe in medicine and therefore did not go to a doctor. Rather, I prayed to the saint and Allah cured me through his intercession. Now I visit the dargah every week.'

Many others are reticent about the problems that drove them finally to the dargah. They prefer to state the change that took place in their lives as the result of their pilgrimage. One Hindu, who owns a truck and is constantly on the move, told me that there was a time when he did not own a truck, and had many problems. A Muslim friend gave him some literature on the dargah. The next time he arrived in Delhi he visited the dargah and prayed to the saint, with the desired beneficial consequence: 'Ever since that day I have had no problems worth mentioning. The saint takes care of me. Even then, I come to the dargah whenever I have to pass through Delhi, for it is a holy place.'

A businessman told me he used to visit the dargah as a child with his mother. But, as he grew up, he gave up the practice. As the years passed he found himself with problems which defied solution. In desperation, he visited the dargah. After that, he said,

the problems began to disappear. Now, problems do come my way, but they are small and disappear quickly. I visit the dargah every month and bring my wife and child along. I do not ask for anything, for the saint knows and sees to all my needs. When I come here, I feel a sense of peace and quiet and I forget the world with all its meanness and problems.

THE PILGRIMS' EXPERIENCES OF THE SAINT AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

Continued interviews with those who visit the dargah regularly, expecting nothing specific, revealed their unshakeable faith that Hazrat Nizamuddin is alive. They often said, 'He is not dead. He has only put a veil between himself and us, ordinary mortals. That is why we cannot see him.' But sometimes he is believed to appear to some people. These appearances are taken as a mark of special favour and love. They occur in places where many people are present, but it is only the chosen few who are gifted with the ability to see him. The son of one pir told me he overheard one regular visitor to the dargah tell his father that whenever he entered the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, he saw him sitting cross-legged on his tomb. Another young pirzada told me that 'many of the older generation had seen thè saint. Unfortunately, this is not so common today because not many are interested in spiritual attainment.' One middle-aged woman confided that she had on many occasions seen the saint walking around the dargah. Others have seen the saint in dreams. A woman told me she sees the saint in a dream every time she recites the Quran on the side of the tomb where his head is supposed to lie. Still others talked of an experience of the personal presence of the saint every time they entered the dargah.

Because of the saint's personal holiness and close association with God the dargah, the place where he is 'most certainly present', is called holy ground. Pilgrims and pirzade stress the holiness of the place by pointing to the behaviour of all who enter the dargah, contrasting it with the behaviour of people who visit the tombs of other famous and powerful Muslims—Emperor Humayun's tomb being a favourite point of comparison (this is opposite the Nizamuddin dargah). One pirzada, reiterating these views on different occasions, said:

In Humayun's tomb, the tomb of a very famous and powerful emperor, people walk around with their shoes on and their heads uncovered. They talk aloud and laugh, showing absolutely no respect for the great person buried there. But here the atmosphere is different. Everyone who enters, even tourists, come in removing their shoes, covering their heads and talking in low tones.without being told. They walk around the dargah with respect, and most pray, instinctively feeling the presence of the saint.

I was also told the story of a man who dared sweep the inner shrine of Hazrat Nizamúddin, a task reserved only for the pirzada. One evening there was an interesting play in progress near the dargah, to which most of the pirzade had gone. The pirzada whose turn it was to sweep and close the shrine also wished to attend. But finding no other pirzada to take his place, he delegated the job to a friend. When he, along with some other pirzade, returned from the play later that evening, they found the shrine still open and suffused in a strange light. On entering the shrine they saw a man flat on his face with a broom in his hand. They immediately took him out of the shrine and poured water on his head. When he regained consciousness he told them that as soon as he had started sweeping the shrine a powerful ray of light emerged from the tomb and struck him down. He was very frightened and had no recollection of what happened after that. The pirzade immediately said some prayers to appease the angry saint and themselves swept the shrine.

However, the pirzade and pilgrims do not dwell only on the fear element pertaining to the holiness of the place. They are quick to point out another element which exists side by side and is much more in evidence—love. Pilgrims talk of the saint loving them personally, as they are, with all their problems and defects. This love is not restricted to a few but extends to all, even those who do not visit the dargah. One pirzada told me of a poor man who fifteen years earlier swept the area in front of the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin every day, out of devotion to the saint. Once, while sweeping, he thought to himself that the saint would not know him or the humble service he performed, there being so many important and more worthy persons visiting him daily. While thinking thus he heard a voice call out to him. Looking around and seeing no one, he continued with his work. Then he heard the same voice call out to him a second time. Thinking that someone from within the shrine was calling out to him, he entered the shrine. There he saw a dis-

embodied arm hanging erect above the tomb, with the palm of the hand open and facing him. And, at the same time, he heard a voice say to him: 'I know by name every single person who passes by Delhi Gate. How can you think that I do not know of your existence and of the humble service you do me every morning?' I was also told by many of a woman who was very worried because she could not get her daughter married for lack of means to provide her with a suitable dowry. One day this woman happened to be praying to the saint in the mosque, which is in the dargah and a few feet away from the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin. As she prayed, one of the two gold bowls hanging from the roof of the mosque fell at her feet. Seeing the gold bowl as a gift from the saint to pay her daughter's dowry, she took it away.[2]

Very often, cures from various illnesses and solutions to problems are taken as proofs of the saint's deep love for those who visit him. Usually the saint waits for persons to approach him first. Even then, some do not have their petitions granted. Such persons console themselves by saying that the saint is testing them, and assure themselves of the saint's love for them by repeating to themselves the good things the saint has done for others. But in some rare instances the saint approaches persons even before they know of his existence. For instance, one woman told me:

> Eight years ago I had terrible problems and I did not know what to do. One night whilst in the midst of those problems, I saw a very old man in a dream telling me not to worry, for all would go well. Then I awoke and inexplicably experienced deep peace and contentment. And just as the man in the dream had said, the problems really did disappear. Three years later my husband was transferred to Delhi. Hearing of this famous dargah I decided to pay it a visit. When I arrived here I recognized it as the surroundings of the old man in my dream. And I realized that the old man who had appeared to me was none other than Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Ever since I have come to visit him once every week and sometimes twice.

Whether the pilgrims approach Hazrat Nizamuddin first or vice versa makes no difference to the pilgrims. In both cases they see him as loving them first. Moreover, they see his love as undeserved,

[2] The pirzada admit hearing this story but claim it to be false. The pilgrims explain the pirzade's rejection of the story by saying that the pirzade have no other option, for their job is to protect the treasures of the dargah.

and for that reason all the more profound, for they cannot lose his love because of their own unworthiness. This makes pretences before him superfluous. Thus the place where he dwells, the dargah, is the place where they can be themselves. Those who are in pain cry out aloud without shame. Some pilgrims go so far as to openly admit their utter sinfulness, begging the saint for forgiveness and peace.

Together with this deep sense, of being loved as they are, is a deep assurance of being protected by the saint from reprisals. A few denounce the pirzade and their malpractices to their face, and the pirzade only try to laugh it away. One fakir, who was literally shouting abuses at the government and the country's rulers, told me: 'The saint will protect me as he has always done. The police have on many occasions tried to arrest me because of my criticism, but they have always been prevented from doing so.'

This deep, undeserved and protective love for them, the pilgrims point out, is in accordance with the life of the saint:

> He gave up marriage in order to be more available to serve the poor and the needy.... He regularly received large sums of money, but always distributed it to the poor who would crowd his *khanqah*, keeping nothing for himself.... Every afternoon he would feed whoever came to visit him with the best possible food.... Once a visitor seeing the quality of the *langar* he served decided to eat with the pir himself, thinking to himself that since the langar was so good, the pir's lunch would have to be tasted to be believed. Accordingly, he insisted on lunching with the pir himself and eating only what he ate. The pir and his disciples tried their best to dissuade him, telling him he would regret his decision but without success. Finally, after everyone had had his fill at the langar, the pir invited him to lunch with him. A small bowl of very bitter vegetable was placed before them. After inviting him to being, the saint began to eat the most inedible parts of the vegetable, leaving aside the tastier, fleshy parts. The guest was surprised and asked if anything would follow. The saint replied that this was the only food he ate and that he had invited him to join only because he had insisted on eating only what he himself ate. The guest tried to eat but was unable to. In the end he left with great humility and respect for the saint.... Indeed, many a time the saint refused to eat even that inedible meal out of solidarity with the countless poor who would have to go hungry.

Today, the pilgrims point out, the saint continues to feed the poor and the hungry through the rich pilgrims who visit him.

What is far more important, the pilgrims say, is that he makes them acceptable to God: 'This holy man who is very close to God and still deeply concerned for us and for our welfare understands our plight, for he was a man like us. Therefore, he is able to take our case to God, intercede on our behalf and make us more acceptable to him.' People come in large numbers to say the namaz on Thursday evening, and on Friday and Sunday afternoons, believing that he prays with them and makes up for defects and deficiencies in their prayers. A few pilgrims and some pirzade talk of the strength the saint has given them to follow more strictly the tenets of Islam, thus enabling them to be more pleasing to God. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is, in effect, the mediator between the pilgrims and God. Both the pilgrims and the pirzade are very fond of saying:

> One does not approach the King [God] directly. First, one approaches the gate-keeper [Amir Khusrau] and then the courtier [Hazrat Nizamuddin], leaving it to him to plead one's case before the King, trusting fully that he will try his best to bring about a happy verdict. Hazrat Nizamuddin is the beloved of God and therefore God always listens to him.

When reminded of the Quranic injunction that there is no one between a person and God, they respond,

> Of course, one can approach the King directly. But when one looks at oneself and sees one's own unworthiness, one knows that there is a far greater possibility of being rejected and condemned, than accepted. Therefore it is much better to approach the King through the courtier, especially this one, for besides being loved by the King, he loves us.

THE PILGRIMS' RESPONSE TO THE SAINT

Generally, the response evoked is one of love, gratitude, reverence, often expressed also by the distribution of alms.[3]

[3] However, not all respond to the saint with gratitude and love. I came across only one case of ingratitude. A man who is a regular visitor to the Tablighi Jama'at, but who is very opposed to the dargah and its practices, makes great efforts to draw people away from the dargah. This man is also very critical of the dargah, even though he was once forced to go there and pray for a job. In order to get his petition granted he stayed outside the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin for two weeks. Consequently, he got a job as a cook in the Gulf. Now

The saint's love for them, the pilgrims say, has evoked from deep within themselves a deep love for him. Their regular visits to the dargah is one expression of this love they bear him. One said, 'I make it a point to come here as often as I can because I love this saint who loves me so much.' Another said, 'I come to give my attendance to the saint. I want him to know that I have not forgotten his love or taken it for granted.' Many have said, 'I feel a deep sense of happiness and peace whenever I am here, close to the saint.' One woman told me, 'I feel the supporting presence of the saint wherever I am. But all the same, I just have to come here to visit him and express my thanks and love for him.' Very important to these people is the '*urs* (feast day of the saint), for 'that is his big day and keeping away from him on that day would be the most unpardonable of offences.'

Once in the dargah, the pilgrims kiss the steps leading to the shrines of Amir Khusrau and Hazrat Nizamuddin, and the thresholds of the doorways to their shrines. On entering the shrines they spread rose petals on the tombs and, after greeting the saints, walk around the tomb, at the end of which they kiss the *chaddar* (the cloth covering the tomb) and the small marble fence surrounding the tomb, sometimes touching their eyes and cheeks against these. Before leaving the shrine they lift the chaddar on that side of the tomb where the feet of the saints are supposed to lie, and pull it over their heads, touching their faces to the tomb. Once outside the shrines they light incense sticks, explaining all these actions as manifestations of their love for the saint. Finally, they go to the side of the shrine where the head of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is supposed to lie and recite a part or the whole of the Quran, saying that the saint loves to hear it recited to him, for it is the word of God. Explaining their actions further, they say:

When someone loves another, for example a child, he wants to touch him and kiss him and be with him all the time doing him services that he likes. So it is between us and the saint. We do not worship the saint knowing that worship is due to God alone, but we love him deeply and are ready to do anything for him.

The pilgrims also manifest their love for the saint by putting into

he is back after completing his contract but does not visit the dargah, even though his house is next to it.

the collection-box whatever they can afford. They know that this money is not only for the maintenance of the dargah but also for the upkeep of the pirzade who look after the dargah. They say of them: 'Whatever their faults and failings, they are the blood relatives of the saint. And they serve an important function by maintaining the dargah, keeping order and praying for us.' Finally, they give food, clothing and money to the poor and beggars whenever possible, saying that in this they are continuing the work of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, and in the bargain becoming instruments of his love for them and themselves, drawing closer to God.

For the pilgrims, pirs and pirzade the mystery of God's love for man, manifest in Hazrat Nizamuddin's love and concern for them, is the realization of salvation. The entrance into this mystery is not a matter of human intelligence or mere rationality, but a gift to be received with gratitude, in faith and with a pure heart.

Soul of the Soulless: An Analysis of Pir-Murid Relationships in Sufi Discourse

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and
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This paper presents an interpretive analysis of Sufi practice based on interviews with believers affiliated to a dargah in Bareilly, UP.

We would like to clarify at the outset that the word 'soulless' does not here allude to the state or status of the believer. The word contains within it a symptom of the life of a society rather than the lifelessness of an individual. Though borne by an individual, the tormenting prose of soullessness, however obnoxious the term may be, is authored by society. Hence, depicting the individual's quest for the soul turns out to be a saga of society's soullessness.

The respondents belong to a clan whose ancestors were locally known as 'the maulwis' and traditionally held a *zamindari*. They lived in huge *havelis* in a settlement called Bachhraon in the Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The dilapidated brick structures, supported on wooden beams and surrounding spacious halls and courtyards, still stand at Bachhraon. With the abolition of zamindari, however, the clan has steadily grown into a spatially dispersed aggregate of nuclear households. The kinsfolk are spread over many towns and cities in the state, seeking a livelihood while maintaining

* We have received invaluable help from the following: Afzalur Rahman, S.N.H. Jafri, Farhana Tayyab, Suhail Ahmad Faruqi, Usman Ahmad Nizami, A.M. Siddiqui, Salim Qidwai, Christian W. Troll, Neshat Qaiser, Tulsi Patel, Desiderio Pinto, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and the National Labour Institute, New Delhi.

affective ties with relations and reminiscences at Bachhraon. None of our respondents, except one, is presently residing at Bachhraon.

Apart from comments in the conclusion, this presentation merely paraphrases the murid's experiences and explanations. The material used here is largely transcribed from audio-tapes. We have used the present instead of the past tense because the past tense could not capture the respondents' conviction. Most metaphors and meanings used in the text are the respondents' own projections. We have only pursued their inner logic, so that the discourse could be reconstructed. In so doing, we are aware of the dangers inherent in the reification of subjective discourses.

The verses in this paper were invoked by the respondents to refresh their own reason with a relevant rhyme. All the verses recited by the respondents were composed by two Sufi saints, namely Shah Niyaz Ahmad Niyaz (d. 1824) and Shah Muhammad Taqi 'Urf 'Aziz Miyan Raz (d. 1968), both belonging to the spiritual lineage to which the respondents owe allegiance.[1] The respondents quoted the couplets as and when they felt their appropriateness in illuminating an opinion or an experience. The verses seemed to be stored in the memories as repositories of a spiritual tradition and not catalogued according to the mortal identity of the pir. During the course of our interviews, the particular authorship of the verses was blurred in the clarity of meaning which had struck our respondents.

Our analysis attempts to overcome the subjectivist bias by contextualising the Sufi text in the moments of its appropriation by the murids in their real-life situations.

The analysis of the material presented in the paper, perforce, questions a commonplace presupposition relating to the veneration of dargahs. Evoking images of devotees thronging dargahs for the redressal of multiple grievances, such a presupposition holds veneration as directed towards the dargah, and thereby locates its origin and growth in the precincts of the sacred tombs where Sufi saints lie buried. We have argued on the strength of the material presented here that veneration of the tomb is constituted within a complex spiritual methodology which invokes the saint independent of the dargah. The principle of this spiritual invocation is provided

[1] For a historical account of the saints and their silsila, see K. A. Nizami, *Tarikh Masha'ikh-i Chisht*, vol. v (Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Dilli, 1984), pp. 279–93.

by the intricacies of the intimacy with the saint. The compulsions of life do not always allow the murids to pay a visit (*haziri*) at the dargah; the *ta'alluq* with the saint carries the necessary spiritual resources to overcome or resolve a crisis. Even more, the rapport with the saint always mediates between the devotee and the exigencies of life.[2] This paper is an attempt to explore the ta'alluq that empowers the murid to contend with the contingencies of life without necessarily renouncing the world.

The centrality of the pir–murid relationship is deeply anchored in the cosmology of Sufi discourse and can scarcely be validated outside its hermeneutic. For a believer, the hermeneutic is constituted in the habit of the heart. Therefore, an informed enquiry must decipher the inner logic of that habit in the spiritual practice and perceptions of the believer. The present paper is a journey into the world and ways of the allegiance of murids to a certain *silsila*. In its meanings and metaphors, motifs and moods, the hermeneutic alarmingly seems to be an esoteric semiotic contrivance to evoke a lost soul long enshrined in the tomb. But if an enquiry earnestly explores the complex symbolic stream, it strikes upon the shores of real existential situations and living people.

The following is a reconstruction of the cosmology wherein the pir–murid relationship is constituted and which provides the crucible of spiritual conviction to organize the murids' real life. As a sacred relationship the pir-murid ta'alluq is resolutely locked up in a cosmic confidentiality where whispers and silence are too intimate to be disclosed:

زمانے میں اے رآز یہ یاد رکھنا
نہ کہنا کبھی راز اپنا کسی سے

[2] Emile Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976) demonstrates that religious force which animates the sacred particularizes itself by incarnation in a particular consciousness. Each individual is able to appropriate the sacred in his own fashion, with the mark of one's distinctive stamp. However, Durkheim clarifies that the existence of individual cults implies nothing which contradicts or embarrasses the sociological interpretation of religion; for the religious forces to which it addresses itself are only the individualized forms of collective forces and it is still society which is the living source from which individual beliefs and practices draw their nourishment. Our analysis of the saint in Sufi discourse draws upon Durkheim's delineation of 'individual cult' to account for the instances where

(O Raz! Remember in this world never to divulge your secret to anyone.)

To disclose the secret of the sacred intimacy is to risk the distortion of a divine relationship, as, of course, the private trials and triumphs resist public exposure. To unwrap the private in public is to outrage modesty. Not only that, but to pass on the secret to the uninitiated is to lend the truth to false ears that are liable to misinterpret it. So subtle and sublime is the experience that to expound it in wordly words is to caricature the bond. Perforce, either truth cannot be transmitted verbally or what is verbally transmitted is not truth. Truth not only defies the linguistic medium but, according to Sufi belief, it doubts the very ability of human reason to comprehend:

یہ اہلِ خرد کیا سمجھیں گے، یہ اہلِ نظر کیا جانیں گے
اے رازؔ ہمارا راز ہے کیا پوچھو یہ کسی دیوانے سے

(It is neither for the men of reason nor those who just speculate.
O Raz! the mystery of my secret, only the mad would know.)

So sensitive is the intimacy and so personal is the communion of the murid and the pir that any misreporting or misinterpretation is liable to deny the relationship its authenticity and richness. Therefore, any account of this intimacy should neither discredit the soul of the intimate, nor even question the veracity of the spiritual experience.[3]

Even if an account is true to the substance of spiritual experience, the truth of that experience is still remote: It can only be encountered, not fruitfully analysed.[4] It presupposes unconditional commitment, not dispassionate discussion. Thus, scientific analysis

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the saint apears to his murids when their life-situations make it impossible for them to personally visit the saint or his tomb.

[3] For further understanding of this component of religious experience see Emile Durkheim, p. 416.

[4] Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1973).

[5] The overwhelming spiritual meaning invested in the concept of '*ishq* is scarcely represented in it English equivalent of the word 'love'. To be honest to the spiritual sentiments associated with 'ishq, one must at once admit that the concept remains opaque in its Anglo-Saxon equivalent.

that seeks detachment denies itself any access to the relentless Sufi quest for truth. Moreover, in paraphrasing on paper, analysis subjects the personal spiritual endowment to the lures of public display in a profane pavilion. To forestall publicity that prohibits providence, the practising subject voluntarily submits to anonymity and thereby lives in the sacred land incognito.

چھوڑو مجھے بے خود مرا آرام یہی ہے
بے نام و نشاں رہنے دو بس نام یہی ہے

(Leave me to my selflessness as this is my repose
My name is inscribed in anonymity and without mark.)

In Sufi belief the pir–murid relationship is eternally kindled by a discourse of divine love (*'ishq-i-haqiqi*).[5] It is only through unqualified and unconditional love for the pir that a murid passes through various stations (*madarij*) in an undulating journey that culminates in the eventual merging with the pir's identity. Divine love sharply contrasts with the kind of love ordinarily practised by mortals. For the believer, mundane love is seldom sustained. As a captive of its own finitude, mundane love gradually isolates the self, thereby distracting the self from divine destiny.

In contradistinction, the love of the murid for the shaikh, the divine love in Sufi belief, is de-caged from the temporality of space and time. It seeks thè immortal and endures. Rather than isolate the self, it restores to the self its divine destiny. Rather than destroy, divine love dissolves the self into divinity. When it grows, it doesn't bear its opposite, but begets itself. The love for the Shaikh is an endless longing that cumulates with ever increasing intensity. Such an undiminishing love bestows on the murid, as it endures, the enhanced spiritual endowments.

شمع و پروانہ بہم دارند ربطِ عاشقی
نیک سنجیدیم سوز ہر دو در میزانِ عشق

[6] For a detailed discussion of *adab* as a code of behaviour and values as well as of methods of personal formation in the pir-murid relationship, see Mohammad Ajmal's 'A Note on Adab in the Murshid-Murid Relationship', in Barbara Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (California: Univ. of California Press, 1984). Also, see C. F. Farah, 'Rules Governing the Shaykh-Murshid Conduct', *Numen*, 21, pp. 81–96.

(The moth (lover) and the burning lamp (beloved) forge a bond of
love with their mutual concern.
Their passions are burning so intensely that they weigh in the scale
of love.)

It is such a divine love which evokes in the murid a spiritual experience devoid of any physicality. In that spiritual experience, 'ishq evolves through successive stages and, if one may say so, a biographical trajectory. At its initiation, 'ishq destroys the lover (in this case the murid as the shaikh's lover), so that the subject of 'ishq vanishes from its script. What remains is the object of love—the ma'shuq (beloved). At the second stage the beloved shaikh's initial response to the lover (murid) and his authentic initiation into 'ishq creates overwhelming discomfort and anxieties in the lover's selfless soul. The spiritual dissolution (*fana'*) of both the lover and the beloved, the subject and the object of 'ishq, marks the next stage in the life of divine love. At this stage neither the lover nor the beloved remain. What survives is 'ishq alone. What remains of the script after fana' is neither its subject nor its subject-matter, but something unknown. This, according to the murid, is then the pinnacle of 'ishq's biographical journey. As a stage in Sufi spiritual accomplishments, murids admit of few pious people privy to this divine privilege.

ز رازِ دہر چہ گویم کہ خود گم یاراں
جز ایں کہ ہیچ ندانم دگر نمی دانم

(Friends, what can I tell you about the mysteries of the universe as
I am lost myself
I know nothing beyond knowing that I do not know anything.)

In Sufi discourse the substance of 'ishq is both an expression and an imagination. While it passes through the subsequent biographical stages, it requires of the murid an intense imagination of the shaikh to realize itself. 'Ishq as imagination invokes the pir within the murid's own body. As an indisoluble imagination it resists any fragmentation of the mental image.

Through the Sufi spiritual vision, the shaikh's ears not only mingle but become the murid's ears, the shaikh's eyes the murid's eyes, the shaikh's nose the murid's nose; the shaikh's tongue the murid's tongue, and thus the intense imagination converts, according to

the murid, the communion into a union. 'Ishq as imagination prompts all of the murid's actions but with the shaikh's permission. The shaikh's wish turns into a divine command guiding the murid's actions. The murid thus possessed by imagination neither acts nor reacts without referring the situation to the pir. It is not only that the pir's words become the murid's words, what is indeed striking is that the murid's words are the pir's words. Yet the murid strives to bring into sharper focus the shaikh's image. Through sustained imagination of the shaikh, the murid concentrates on the pir's toe, and gradually such a focus moves right up through the pir's torso to the head. An accurate imagination by itself acts as a source of power that can establish the control of the soul over other people's bodies. It empowers the murid's soul with the ability to cleanse others of chronic ailments and spiritual contamination. Of course, this process of imagination presupposes, at every stage, the Shaikh's concurrence.

In order to release the experience of imagination, one respondent, an ardent believer in his pir, stumbled upon a simile he thought would explain the matter, otherwise esoteric to the untutored sensibilities of scientific research. He said in a deliberately simplistic voice that as a television set receives the transmission, so does the spiritual set. He then likened the spiritual imagination of the shaikh to the structure of tuning in a television set. Stretching the simile further, he instructively commented that the rapport between pir and murid resembles the finest possible tuning in the electronic communication provided by the televison set. According to the same respondent, accurate imagination acts in the same way as an appropriate antenna, through which the spiritual messages must pass so that a proper reception is possible. Imagination was therefore a basic requirement of rapport and it was suggested by the murid that the more the rapport the greater the *hasilat* (gains).

To the casual observer, it is clear from the very beginning that the Sufi experience of ta'alluq is spiritually more intense and intricate than what the physics of television reception can possibly suggest. Perforce, the personal encounters and anecdotes passionately narrated by the murid contain within them the distinctive character of what constitutes ta'alluq. Providing various instances from his own personal biography, our respondent fondly embellished the intimately personal dimension in the ta'lluq that could never be taken for granted.

Being a specialist in his own field and occupying a rather responsible position in a state concern, our respondent, a murid, had to live at one time in town far from Bareilly, where both the *khanqah* and dargah were located. Once, on the eve of an '*urs* at Bareilly, the murid decided to send the *nazr* (offering) by post as official responsibility prevented personal presence. On despatching the money-order he felt somehow uncomfortable and, as the feeling became unbearable, he set out for the khanqah. Much against the official norms of seeking leave of absence from the headquarters, he immediately called on the concerned clerk and rushed towards the railway station. Although he was very late for the Bareilly-bound train, he had an inner intuition that he would be able to board the train. That the train was delayed for departure that evening, making it possible for him to leave for Bareilly, was of little surprise to him. After all wasn't it the pir seeking him? However, on reaching the khanqah he was upset to learn from fellow murids that *sarkar* (pir) was rather displeased with him, as at one time he even wanted the money-order to be returned. If the money-order was not returned, it was because the pir had respected the repeated requests of the murid's father, himself a devoted murid, who had urged the pir to retain the nazr. It was when the pir did not return the salaam that the respondent's worst fears were confirmed. He felt degraded and distressed, as if he were left in the lurch. Overwhelmed by a deep emotional grief during the *qawwali* that night, he became so vulnerable that while presenting the nazr to the pir he lost his hold and succumbed to the inner storm. Words turned into tears. His face wore a doe's look and on seeing his state the pir immediately embraced him, and the pir too broke down. Arm-in-arm, thus united, the devoted murid and his beloved pir had come to symbolize an instance of the divine relationship. The *qawwals* following the tradition, kept singing the same verse over and over—the verse that synchronized with the spiritual state (*hal*). After his recovery the congregation profusely congratulated the respondent, for it was treated as a divine moment, as a rare proximity that evokes not only a sense of awe but envy—a longing for that opportunity in the anxious eyes of the participants. The pir consequently confirmed that the postal money-order by way of *nazr* does not express the ta'lluq. Indeed, money is no means, the pir reiterated, for maintaining the rapport. As a matter of fact, personal presence or hazri is paramount. Ta'lluq is its own testimony and requires

nothing other than itself to blossom. In the Sufi community a murid always feels that his/her proximity to the shaikh is next to none. And this is a spiritual trait well within the tradition of Muhammad, the Prophet. The followers of the Prophet vied with each other in their claims to the closest intimacy (*qurbat*) with him. Echoing the essence of qurbat, the respondent convincingly recalled that on the death of a pir a grocer came from a neighbouring village and told the pir's son that the pir had intimately loved him, perhaps more than what his son could ever claim to have enjoyed.

Indeed, far from being ascriptive, the pir–murid relationship is based on achievements of station or height (madarij) through spiritual investment. Through an unconditional and unqualified respect for the pir, the murid expresses such investment through *adab*.[6] The bondage of the murid to the pir is expressed literally by the term *ghulami* (enslavement). As an obedient servant of the pir, the murid hopes to occupy closer proximity and thereby perfect the personal ta'lluq.

The practice of adab in the Sufi tradition surpasses mere habitual deference to one's spiritual leader. Our respondents related more than one anecdote to account for the real meaning of adab. Recounting an incident from the family lore concerning the maulwis of Bachhraon, our respondent insisted on making adab intelligible through an intimate history. A particular patriarch who was held in a very high esteem for his seniority and status in the clan, was a murid to a pir who was scarcely twelve years old, who had inherited the 'carpet' by the untimely death of the predecessor.[7] The young

[7] The Sufi religious practice in its rituals suspends the non-ritual social space and indeed it can invert social imperatives, thereby concealing the truth of its own conditions. For the fetishism of the secular social space in the ritual context, see Maurice Bloch, 'Past and the Present in the Present', *Man*, XII, 1977.

[8] There is a constant dialogism that runs through many of the Sufi verses. Such a dialogism makes it possible for the self and the saint to speak in their own voices whilst mingling into each other through a linguistic possibility where the first person's voice is transposed to the third person and vice versa. For an exposition of the possibilities in communication through dialogism, see Edward M. Bruner and Phyllis Gorfain, 'Dialogic Narration and the Paradoxes of Masada', in Bruner (ed.), *Text, Play and Story: The Construction and Reconstruction of Self and Society* (Washington: American Ethnological Society, 1984).

pir was, as a matter of fact, related to the murid—the eldest maulwi in the clan. During a service when the maulwi was fondly fanning the pir and respectfully stuffing the hookah with tobacco, the pir felt somewhat embarrassed, and even expressed it to the maulwi. The maulwi, in reply, retorted that he was not filling the twelve-year-old's hookah but paying tribute to his shaikh (who was no more). This he considered to be his *sa'adat* (happiness). In relating the exemplary adab to the pir, our respondent further qualified the legend by eagerly adding that here was the maulwi who excelled in self-esteem, and his esteem as a zamindar survived the tumultuous period during the abolition of the zamindari system. There was an implicit hint, in the murid's voice, at the close connection between the extent of adab and the related material and non-material accomplishments.

In yet another anecdote the respondent fondly related from the stock of childhood memories of the devotion among the maulwis of Bachhraon. Once again the exemplary expression of adab touches the Sufi spiritual soul. A revered maulwi once, while accompanying his pir, noticed a *kahar* (palanquin bearer) carrying the pir in the palanquin short of breath under the weight and losing his step in a puddle. At once the maulwi seized upon the opportunity and rushed his shoulder under his pir's palanquin. The picture of the bare-footed maulwi thus carrying his pir remains a deeply etched symbol of adab in the mind of our respondent. In a setting where maulwis were seldom seen walking on the village streets, for a senior member of a clan—who should have himself been carried in a palanquin—to actually proxy a kahar is what adab is all about.

Just as 'ishq is boundless in its intensity, so does *adab* know no limits in its expression. On one occcasion, while deeply immersed in a conversation with a congregation of murids, some Sufi pir, according to our respondent, surprised his company by suddenly standing up in the middle of conversation. This prompted the murid to pursue the matter as soon as the pir sat down. The pir, by and by, said he had seen a dog that lived in the vicinity of the dargah of his pir, and therefore deserved to be respected. This then is adab, a practice that restrains the relentless flame of 'ishq. If 'ishq unites the murid to the pir through devotion, adab binds them through deference. While intense devotion dissolves the distance between the murid and the pir, an undefined deference provides proximity by defining the distance between the two. Though 'ishq and adab

never combine in logic, yet in Sufi spiritual experience they come together. Such a state is that vortex of Sufi experience where 'ishq and adab, as vehicle and tenor, are so sublimated as to lose their specific associations. To be accurate, the experience is a blending of the subject and the object in a rhythm that defies demarcations.[8]

ہم خود او معشوق و عاشق، ہم خود او حسن است و عشق
ہم خود او معبود و عابد، در نگاہِ ہوش مند

(To a wise person, one who is tempered in the Seasons of love,
We are both a lover and beloved, love and beauty, God as well the worshipper.)

میں نے کہا کیا زیست ہے بولے مرا اقرار ہے
میں نے کہا ہے موت کیا. بولے مرا انکار ہے
میں نے کہا میں کون ہوں بولے کہ بندہ ہے مرا
میں نے کہا تیری طلب کہنے لگے بیکار ہے
میں نے کہا شب کیا ہے بولے عکسِ گیسو ہے مرا
میں نے کہا دن کیا ہے بولے تابشِ رخسار ہے
میں نے کہا دوزخ ہے کیا کہنے لگے دُوری مری
میں نے کہا جنّت ہے کیا بولے مرا دیدار ہے
میں نے کہا تسکیں ہے کیا بولے مری چشمِ کرم
میں نے کہا سوزش ہے کیا بولے مرا آزار ہے
میں نے کہا تم کون ہو، بولے سراج السّالکیں
میں. بولا رازِ ناتواں، .بولے مرا بیمار ہے

[9] Durkheim (ibid.) makes it explicit that religious life aids an individual to endure suffering in life. 'The believer who has communicated with his God is

I asked what is life, he said my affirmation
I asked what is death, he said my negation
I asked who am I, he said my servant
I asked if I could seek him, he said it's in vain
I asked what is night, he said a shadow of my tresses
I asked what is day, he said a shine of the beauty of my cheeks
I asked what is hell, he said it's separation from me
I asked what is heaven, he said a glimpse of me
I asked what is contentment, he said a favour from me
I asked what is anguish, he said a yearning for me
I asked who you are, he said *Sirajus Salikin*
I asked what is the mystery of Raz, he said his perpetual yearning for me.)

This encounter confers on the murid the spiritual merit to exercise, if required, a certain control over the characters and conditions of life. In union with the pir's soul, the seeker's soul is not only spiritually embellished. It is, in Sufi perception, empowered with a practical efficacy to influence events and such consequences as endanger existence. The self enjoys the unique ability to secure the submission of hostile forces. In Sufi discourse, control over the other's body through spiritual labour is arduously accomplished. However, control over the body is essentially temporary. It is in the submission of the other's soul that the spiritual labour seeks to secure eternal control. And this eternal control, made possible by unison with the shaikh's soul, provides the murid an inner resilience to resist the errors of the real world. Rendering evil forces benign, curing a chronic ailment, retrieving a lost loan, procuring an overdue promotion, successfully securing a certain job, ensuring success in an impossible exam or a house allotment and the like were narrated to us in their own personal experiences by earnest murids.

We shall, however, only relate selected anecdotes, suggesting that these are, metaphorically speaking, flashes in an album of stills, like treasured mementos collected in the wanderings of murid

not merely a man who sees new truths of which the unbeliever is ignorant; he is a man who is *stronger*' (Emphasis original), p. 416. Similarly, Clifford Geertz (ibid.) reminds us, 'As a religious problem, the problem of suffering is, paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make of physical pain, personal loss, wordly defeat, or the helpless contemplation of other's agony something bearable, supportable—something . . . sufferable' (p. 104).

lives. As episodes in a serial, they share a common backdrop. It is not the factual veracity but the authenticity of faith which lends these diverse anecdotes a common spiritual chord.

At the time of the birth of his third son, one murid recounted how he felt lonely and forsaken, for his parents had not turned up from the home town till the eleventh hour of the delivery. Before the onset of labour he left for the dispensary to call on the lady doctor who was providing his pregnant wife with the necessary medical care. Unluckily for him, the doctor was away on a call. Disappointed, he had to return home. But minutes later he again set out on his search for medical assistance as its need had become urgent. On a freezing December night, our respondent confided, he was on his bicycle, shuttling between the dispensary and the residence of the lady doctor like a desperate soul. Himself a heart patient, he was on that night feeling dizzy with high blood pressure. In such a plight he spotted through the windowpane a bedroom lamp lit up in the doctor's residence. Hopeful of finding the doctor, he proceeded towards the doorbell. However, he hesitated, for it was late in the night and the doctor renowned for her ill-temper and a snappiness that our respondent associated with spinsters. Overcome by fatigue and failure to provide his pregnant wife with proper care, his mind went blank. Never had he felt so solitary. To prevent collapse he rested his head over his bicycle seat.

At that very moment he sighted his pir (the predecessor to the present *sajjada-nashin*, who is no more) sitting by his wife's bedside, looking into his eyes with surprise at his loss of hope at the doctor's door. This was the picture—the power that gathered him together and propelled him forward to the doorbell. The respectable reception which the hesitant request received at the doorstep made him doubt his own senses. It didn't seem to him that it was the same lady doctor the neighbourhood knew. That night the compassionate doctor was to oversee a perfect and painless childbirth. A few days later, his wife confirmed that his pir had called on her to console her during those uncertain hours of the night when he was away looking for the doctor. What more, the respondent queried, could reaffirm his faith than such an intimate confirmation from one he knew was a non-believer.

At another time, in a certain north-Indian city where the respondent resided, a communal inferno reduced neighbourhood relationships between the Shias and the Sunnis to ashes. The murid's

own *mohalla*, peopled by both the Muslim sects, was alarmed with arson, killings and looting. Trapped in the terror of violence, through restless days and the wakeful hours of night, the respondent recalled the violent frenzy that was blind to a person's innocence. The air was foul with rumours and, what was worse, he could hardly separate rumours and reality.

As an honourable state government employee, the respondent thought it proper to contact his office with the hope that he be rescued. Despite the curfew he managed to slip in the dark to the neighbouring mohalla to a telephone. On speaking to his superiors he realised that this was of no avail. His superior expressed the fear that in a situation of lawlessness and arson, rescue was impossible as no vehicle could cross the road without damage. The respondent felt absolutely abandoned; there was nobody around to either console or protect him. It was at this point that his faith asserted itself, and he felt ashamed and wondered why the thought of his pir had not flashed across his mind. It was then that he turned to his pir.

As soon as he had returned home he saw, standing on the balcony, his pir (who was no more). The pir advised him to perform *dastak* (reciting Quranic verses with the clapping of hands) in the courtyard and on the road. Fearlessly, the respondent stepped out on the road despite the curfew. Even when his wife expressed her anxiety he remained underterred. That night the pir, standing at a distance, advised him to recite a certain prayer of petition (*du'a*) uninterruptedly throughout the night, and he distinctly remembered sighting the pir briskly climbing up the stairs until the silhouette vanished into the dark. The respondent claimed he followed him until he lost trace of him. Soon the family joined him in reciting the prayer of petition right through the night, taking turns. The spell of the prayer was scarcely unnoticeable. That was the first night since the riot broke out that passed completely peacefully. There were no echoes of fanatic slogans of 'Ya Ali' and 'Allah-o-Akbar' by quarelling crowds. All of a sudden, peace prevailed and began to restore the rhythm of everyday life.

The next morning, as though by appointment, a cycle rickshaw was parked outside the respondent's residence. Impulsively the respondent asked if the rickshaw-wallah was willing to take them to the railway station. Impressed by his readiness, he enquired if a second rickshaw would be available, as one could not suffice for

the whole family. Very quickly, the family was ready to leave for the railway station. These rickshaws, the respondent reiterated, were requisitioned by his pir to cart them through the curfew-bound bazaars, which even the official vehicles of his department refused. As though they had no need for curfew passes, vigilant policemen did not intercept them. Their long journey to the ancestral village passed happily. Only the pir could have armed the family to face a calamity such as this.

The murid pleaded that his rapport with his pir was always intimate and as old as his memory. Through a charged invocation of recollections, he rekindled his past to relive the relationship, to reinforce the ta'lluq. Amidst memories of *qawwalis*, shikars, *da'waten*, gaiety and fanfare, the murid recounted his childhood encounter with his pir, when he was a mere eight-year-old seeking *bai'at* (spiritual allegiance). On soliciting the permission of his father (who was himself a murid), the respondent admitted to his heightened sense of achievement at the prospect of accomplishments which he had so often dreamt of as a child. In the sprawled havelis of Bachhraon, the pir's visits were always craved for and celebrated with jubilation. On one such visit, when the pir was approached by his father offering him as a murid, the pir unexpectedly laughed it off. 'What is the hurry?' he queried.

As a young murid he approached the pir to suggest readings from the scriptures. Looking at the congregation, the pir commented: 'Look at this young boy. He aspires to become a *wali Allah* at this age.' The young murid felt disconcerted at his haste but never compromised in his aspiration to spiritual accomplishment. On his persistence, the pir spelled out a prayer of petition (du'a) which he instructed the murid to repeat on the beads during the course of the day. The du'a instantly seeped into the tender heart of the young murid, who could recite it flawlessly. He found this disconcertingly easy, but realized in a few years that to recite this simple du'a *every day* was not so simple. The easiest lesson proved to be the most difficult one in his life. In humility, he admitted to himself that he couldn't, in spite of his best intentions, make it a habit. Ever since then he couldn't gather the courage to ask the pir to suggest relevant Quranic verses.

Over the years the respondent had learnt to look upon the pir as a *hakim* who could read the pulse of his patient and suggest cures for maladies. He had, therefore, abandoned himself to the pir's

spiritual guidance and seldom questioned the pir's prescription. He remained convinced through his own experiences that only in-depth and informed spiritual education can aspire to decipher the real meaning of the pir's pronouncements. Humbly, the murid said that his pir's subsequent reluctance to discuss spiritual matters with him hardly surprised him, for the pir had the ability to fathom the inner space and its capacity.

According to the respondent there is a perennial rain of *'inayat* (kindnesses) and *barakat* (blessings) which are constantly showered upon him by his pir. Even when a situation does not ostensibly seem related to the pir, in reality there are seldom segments in the respondent's biography that are bereft of the pir's benevolence. The murid proudly confessed the privileges he enjoyed by his affiliation to the spiritual lineage. It was the tradition of his khanqah that on writing a letter stating any problem faced by the murid, the problem no longer remained with the murid but shifted through a divine vow to the pir's shoulders. The miseries were struck off from the text of the murid's self as it was the pir who now had to dispense these difficulties. The murid's unflinching devotion guaranteed a spaceless spiritual stand-by. Each time the soul felt feeble to stand on its own, it leaned on the divine support that was eternally granted to the devotee:

اے طالباں اے طالباں من باشما ہر جا ستم
ہم جلوہ گہ در دیدہ ہا ، ہم مضمر دلہا ستم

(O Seekers, O Seekers! I always stay very close to you
In your eyes, in your heart my image resides.)

Thus, the murid was assured of access everytime he desired his pir. On the death of the pir his nominee inherited the spiritual patrimony to provide the murid continual access to the spiritual lineage.

There is hardly a chapter in the murid's biography which escapes the pir's examination. Since every print, every phrase and every pause in the biography is the pir's providence, there is little in the text the self regrets. So what if sufferings persist? Since they are authored by the pir, agony is one's fortune.

یہی رات دن میں دُعا مانگتا ہوں
مری شامِ غم کی سحر ہو نہ جائے

(I pray day in and day out:
The night of my sorrows should never see its dawn.)

The pir does not, however, plant suffering on the murid's being for nothing. To the murid worldly suffering is willingly suffered not simply because it is authored by the pir. More importantly, the murid sees in suffering the pir's desire to purify his soul. The worldly favours that the pir bestows on the murid are liable to contaminate the murid's soul. This liability prompts the pir to provide precautions lest the favours corrupt the soul. For example, the pir, while blessing the murid with a lucrative job, may well decide to balance the blessing with a liability. So, the *murid's* loving son may become indisposed. In consequence, the delicately blended favours and failures temper the murid towards the necessary predisposition to firmly pursue spiritual attainment.

The pir, too, suffers similarly. The principle of suffering is indispensable to divine realisation.[9] One of our respondents related to us an anecdote from his *pir's* life. The pir's third daughter was married to a person belonging to a princely state from a well-known town. He was so wealthy that his feet had never touched an uncarpeted floor. However, after marriage the young couple faced untold misfortunes. Through a series of personal tragedies the son-in-law had been totally estranged from his rich patrimony. In a state of desperation, he turned to the *khanqah*. Having sold off their personal valuables, the couple lived from hand to mouth on borrowed money. As if this were not enough, two of their sons succumbed to serious ailments. The third son accidently fell into a cauldron (*degcha*) where *korma* was being prepared, and was thus instantly burnt to death. The fourth and only remaining son fell from a swing and was infected by tetanus, and he, too, lost his life. The pir was a silent witness to the loss of his grandchildren and the plight of his daughter and son-in-law. At every single agonizing moment the pir with his unruffled poise, was aware of the real

[10] For an insightful distinction between the religious and the scientific perspective, see Emile Durkheim and Clifford Geertz (ibid.).

meaning of these mishaps. For ten long years his son-in-law was to work as an underpaid clerk in a certain match factory, commuting on his bicycle to his place of work, twelve miles from where he lived. The pir's long ordeal ended with his sudden death. He was buried in his ancestral place and later his tomb attracted thousands of people. Today it is the site of an annual 'urs. With envy in his eye, the respondent asked, 'Can one dream of a better honour than this?'

It was not just his pir, the respondent explained: the Prophet himself had extolled wordly impoverishment. The murid quoted the words of the Prophet:

الفقر فخری

(Poverty is my pride.)

Or, in the words of one's shaikh:

گدا و بے نوایم، بے سر و برگشت سامانم
نہ خواہم ملک اسکندر، نہ جاہ و حشمتِ دارا

(I am a helpless poor, a destitute who neither aspires to Alexander's kingdom nor Dara's grandeur and magnificence.)

These are not merely incidents in the murid's world. They are, of course, judgements on the world that the murid so often rejects yet is compelled to inhabit. Through symbols, saints and tombs, the litany of spiritual faith speaks a language that is neither confirmed by the teleology of truth nor testified by a rational sequence of causes. Entering the realm that lies beyond the frontier of reason and the language of rational life[10], the Sufi belief points to the limits of the social world and indeed the world of its possibilities. In so doing, the spiritual faith derives its efficacy from the penumbra where reason rarely resides but which life seldom ignores. The ruling world of reason can rarely render that penumbra intelligible to the murid. Thus abandoned by the dominant reason, the murid is left with no other choice except to tune himself to a rhythm alien to reason. Escaping the tyranny of soullessness the soul seeks its cosmos in an enduring relationship with the saint. And this is a relationship that renovates, restores and revives the soul from the dark and shambles of soullessness. The opaque penumbra that resists

the reign of reason is not some esoteric residue of life.[11] It is, in a real sense, as palpable as the curfew clamped night, teargas shells celebrating state power, panic in the prayer-ground, long postponed promotion, a responsible officer's or indispensable doctor's refusal to understand. In a real sense, it is the rapport with the saint and nothing else that renders the dark alley-ways of life negotiable, its hostility benign, its arrogance compassionate, setbacks triumphs, defeats victories. Illumined by the penumbra and by the spiritual supervision, the murid hears a well-orchestrated symphony in a world filled with discordant notes.

We suggest that the pir–murid relationship in the Sufi discourse which we have delineated remains situated in the symbolic realm but, at the same time, resolves questions relating to social relationships in the real world. Its elevated forms of expression evade ordinary access but elaborately speak of real-life situations, autobiographies and anticipations. It provides the murid an enduring expression in an otherwise contingent situation. When uncertainty strips the self naked and the situation renders it defenceless, the self wraps itself in the armoury of spiritual certainty. Sitting on the carpet in the khanqah or entombed in the venerated dargah, the saint repairs the soul that would otherwise be scrapped in the world of the soulless. Through the discipline of adab and the passion of 'ishq, the self destroys itself inwardly while satisfying the outer imperatives by playing a role assigned in the mortal world. Thus the Sufi self remains staunchly Stoic. An optimist, the self is without hope; a pessimist without despair, for in 'ishq it accepts the condition of total unity and all this in a universe that constantly crushes it, directly or indirectly In 'ishq the self wins, even though a loser.

As a critique of the real in the idiom of the spiritual, Sufi discourse contains within it a methodology of spiritual realization. The doxa to which this spiritual methodology lends itself is the subject of broader

[1] Douglas Kirsner *The Schizoid World of Jean Paul Sartre and R. D. Laing* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977) provides a sensitive attempt to examine the works of Jean Paul Sartre and R. D. Laing to bring to sharper focus the experiences and choices of the self in the context of a schizoid world. It is understood as schizoid in the sense that there is a failure of basic trust in the self and in the general social contexts as sufficiently good and reliable for authentic autonomy and mature relationship to develop. Also see R. D. Laing's analysis of transcendental experience in *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* (Harmond Sworth: Penguin, 1974).

research and embodies both orthodox and heterodox tendencies. To the extent that it subverts social categories by denying their facticity it remains locked up in a heterodoxy capable of a disavowal of forces that subjugate the self. At the same time it speaks the voice of orthodoxy through a universal blueprint of love, where the paradoxes of real life are reconciled.

In the pir–murid rapport the soul is both a possibility and an apology of the soulless. As a possibility it reveals the reality of a complete relationship and thereby exposes incomplete relationships in a soulless society. As an apology it conceals the conditions of its soullessness and reconciles the paradoxes in that condition. In the Muridi's appropriation of the saint as it obtains in Sufi practice, concealment and revelation, deference and denunciation are all but distinct moments. There is no apriori logic to disclose the manner in which the moments are marked in the personal trajectory of the pir–murid rapport.

Religion, Money and Status: Competition for Resources at the Shrine of Shah Jamal, Aligarh*

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This essay examines competition at a shrine, the *dargah* of Shah Jamal Sahib. The shrine is located on the outskirts of Aligarh in western Uttar Pradesh (UP), which possesses a substantial Muslim population and is, largely due to the presence of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), a centre of Muslim interest in north India. Though not as popular as other Sufi shrines such as Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan, or Nizamuddin in Delhi, Shah Jamal attracts a wide following from Aligarh district, among Hindus and Muslims. The dargah itself is a religious institution not only associated with spiritual values but also with material assets. The spiritual and material resources of the shrine create an arena where powerful local interests converge, which constantly conflict with each other. Benefits associated with the shrine thus generate intense competition over their control. This essay attempts to identify these benefits and describe the nature of competition generated.

I argue that the situation at Shah Jamal reflects in microcosm how Muslims in Aligarh view questions of power and status, and that the shrine acts as a vehicle for expressing deeper currents of

* I am grateful for comments on a draft of this paper from Profs. André Beteille, Christopher Shackle and A. F. Usmani, Drs. Jonathan Parry, Christopher Fuller and Juan Cole, and Ralph Russell and Sayyid Zainuddin. The opinions expressed are, however, entirely my own. Material for the paper was gathered during fieldwork in Aligarh between December 1984 and March 1986. Because this volume is on the dargah, I have not included a full description of the function and meaning of the shrine in India or of its association with the Sufi orders. This essay is intended to be an anthropological study rather than a discussion of Sufi practice, hence the descriptive style adopted.

conflict within the Muslim population. I begin by giving an historical background of Shah Jamal and of the practice of creating religious endowments. This is followed by a description of its material resources and the current nature of disputes at the shrine. I conclude with a discussion on the nature of power and status associated with the institution of a dargah.

THE DARGAH OF SHAH JAMAL, ALIGARH—THE BACKGROUND

The dargah of Shah Jamal is one of two centres of local religious devotion in Aligarh, the second being a more recently popular shrine known as Baba Barchi Bahadur Sahib. Shah Jamal belongs to the Chishti line of Sufi orders (*tariqa*) and takes its name from the *pir* (saint) Hazrat Shamsul 'Arifin Shah Jamal Sahib.[1] There is much local disagreement as to the antiquity of the dargah and when Hazrat Shamsul 'Arifin is said to have arrived in Koil, as Aligarh was formerly known. Some claim a history of 800 years, others 500 years, while others make it as recent as 300 years. The author of *Akhbar al-Jamal*, one Raja Muhammad, writing in 1740 (AH 1153) states the pir's death occurred during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq.[2] The district gazetteer of 1926 says local tradition believed Shamsul 'Arifin to be a *darwish* (religious mendicant) living in Koil before its capture by Qutbuddin Aibak in 1194, and who took part in the Muslim assault on the town.[3] There is no firm evidence that the dargah itself was constructed before the seventeenth century, though it is possible that a tomb as the focus of veneration previously existed, even from the early period of Muslim presence

[1] The pir is also known as Hazrat Makhdum Shaikh Jamal Shamsul 'Arifin in some references.

[2] Siddiqi states that there is a 'lack of substantial evidence to support [the book's] findings', and that the author has made a number of unverified or unverifiable statements. Jamal Muhammad Siddiqi, *Aligarh District: A Historical Survey*, centre of Advanced Study, Dept of History, Aligarh Muslim University (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981). A *pir* named Shaikh Shamsuddin, son of Tajul 'Arifin, is mentioned by Ibn Battuta who visited Koil in 1342. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that he is the same person as Shamsul 'Arifin.

[3] H.R. Nevill, *Aligarh: A Gazetteer, being Vol. VI of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Allahabad: F. Luker, Govt Press, 1926).

in the district. The first written reference to the shrine is in a *farman* (grant or royal charter) of 24 December 1795, awarded by the French general de Boigne acting as administrator of Mahadji Sindhia, confirming the use of two villages, Dhorehra and Jamalpur, as *madad-i ma'ash* (maintenance allowance) of the dargah and the descendants of the pir. The 6th Rabi'ul awwal, 1150/1737 is now accepted as the date of the pir's death, and on this day the annual '*urs* (death anniversary) is celebrated at the shrine.

The pir is said to have left three sons, Kamaluddin, 'Alimuddin and Jalaluddin, who continued the Koil branch of the Chishti order and established the structure of the dargah around the tomb of their father. In time, Kamaluddin is believed to have left the area of Koil for Delhi, whereas his two brothers remained. It is unclear from both documentary evidence and oral tradition whether a spiritual successor, or *khalifa*, of Shamsul 'Arifin functioned at the shrine. There is no tradition as such, and no one appears to have acted in that capacity. Spiritual authority associated with the office of khalifa instead remained with the *sajjada-nashins*. This term has come to mean a superior who takes precedence in religious matters of the dargah and plays a key role whenever there are spiritual functions or rituals to perform, particularly during the 'urs.[4] No office holder of the dargah need be related as kin to the original pir. Ideally these offices should be held by those considered by the pir and members of the Sufi order to be most spiritually worthy, whether kin or otherwise. Over the course of time, however, succession at many shrines has tended to become hereditary, as at Shah Jamal. The religious authority associated with Shamsul 'Arifin became vested in his descendants, and substantiated by the very real control they exercised over the land and property of the dargah. They assumed the social status of Shaikh, a high rank in the Muslim social hierarchy (and accorded to Sufi pirs), and adopted the name of Shamsi to distinguish themselves as a separate status group, or brotherhood (*baradari*).[5]

[4] The word comes from *sajjada*, meaning the carpet used by Muslims for prayer, and *nashin*, meaning occupier.

[5] *Baradari* literally means brotherhood. It has a wider implication nowadays in that it indicates the sub-groups which comprise the Muslim population in India. These sub-groups are distinguishable by name, which indicates the origin of their members, and are divided into high and low status categories. High-status baradaris take their group titles from tribes or individuals asso-

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS

The dargah received grants of land to provide a maintenance allowance from the state, but it is not clear which ruler made the original award. Successive rulers did confirm conditional rights of the descendants of Shamsul 'Arifin in relation to the shrine, as did de Boigne in the late eighteenth century, provided certain provisions were met over the management of the dargah. The provisions were that the dargah of Shamsul 'Arifin, known as Shah Jamal, together with its connected mosque and graveyard, should be maintained in good repair; that the 'urs should be held annually, at which time food should be prepared and, together with alms, distributed to the poor and needy (*langar* and *sadqah*); and that regular prayers be offered for the souls of the dead. After these expenses had been met and duties fulfilled, the remaining income passed to the descendants and their families as personal stipends.[6]

The award of property and confirmation of rights over its use meant the descendants of the pir had acquired considerable landholdings in Aligarh district, which were largely given over to agricultural cultivation and animal pasture. With the foundation

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ciated with migration from Arabia, Persia, Turkestan, and Afghanistan, such as Sheikh, Sayyid, Pathan or Bani Israilan. Low-status baradaris are the descendants of indigenous converts and are identifiable by association with a traditional occupation, from which the baradari takes its name, such as Qasa'i (butcher), Lohar (iron-worker), or Bahishti (water-carrier). Many of these latter baradaris have changed their group names in an effort to Islamicize their identity and raise their social status. The baradari itself maintains its identity through endogamy. For a full discussion see E. A. Mann, '*Public Roles and Private Lives: Muslims, Business and Status in North India*', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1987.

of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in the late nineteenth century, soon to be known as Aligarh Muslim University, came a growth in building construction which has increased over the last twenty years. Moreover, businessmen of Aligarh town developed small-scale industry from the 1920s and needed new business sites. Urban development began to spread in the direction of the dargah's landholdings.

The property of Muslim religious institutions, including dargahs, mosques and *madrasas* (schools of Islamic learning), was considered to be *waqf*. Waqf is an endowment of movable or immovable property for religious purposes in Islam.[6] When a property has been made waqf it becomes inalienable, meaning it cannot be given away or sold, while its resources must be used for the purpose originally declared, usually to maintain the fabric of the institution and promote its use. There are two principal forms of waqf, public and private. Public waqf is for public benefit and includes the maintenance of mosques, madrasahs and *imambaras* (buildings in which rituals associated with the month of Muharram are conducted). Private waqf may also be known as *waqf 'alal aulad*, which takes the form of a family trust. The purpose of waqf 'alal aulad is to maintain the family of the donor (*waqif*), or the recipient of the waqf and his descendants in perpetuity, but must include a portion for charitable purposes.[7] It typifies a sense of primary duty aimed

[6] Most waqf property is immovable. Movable property in the form of gold or silver is rare and only occurs at major shrines such as the one at Ajmer. Gifts in the form of jewellery and ornaments such as those Hindus make to temples, do not occur.

[7] This charitable condition often takes the form of maintenance or construction of a mosque or madrasa. This type of waqf is a controversial one, being a phenomenon of north India and in particular of UP and Bihar. In the nineteenth century the British government considered doing away with waqf 'alal aulad, but its efforts caused such a furore it was obliged to retract. Rashid points out, however, that in other Muslim dominated countries such as Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, this form of waqf has either been abolished completely or

towards the family unit, rather than towards the community. A third form is called quasi-public waqf, incorporating features of both public and private endowments in that it may act as a conditional family trust.[8]

Waqf endowments seem to have existed in India from the very early days of Muslim presence in the subcontinent, as did the practice of appointing trustees (*mutawallis*) to administer them. They were often state appointments associated with political favour and social prestige, and the discretionary powers of their appointees were considerable.

Until 1947 the Shamsis had appointed trustees to manage the land and property of Shah Jamal. The trustees were responsible for the practical administration of the dargah by maintaining accounts, preserving the fabric of the shrine and its buildings, organizing and supervising the distribution of alms and food to the poor and pilgrims, and managing the 'urs. There is a clear distinction between the role of the sajjada-nashin and the mutawalli, though the person fulfilling each function may be one and the same; the former is empowered to deal with spiritual offices and responsibilities, while the latter supervises practical administrative and financial arrangements. The two offices may be combined in one person, but are more usually kept separate.[9] The aim of this separation is to allow

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greatly restricted. K. Rashid, *Waqf Administration in India* (Delhi, 1978). Kozlowski also suggests waqf 'alal aulad or waqf-e-khandan did not occur in India before the British period. Gregory C. Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India* (Cambridge University Press, 1985). Irfan Habib confirms he has not been able to find records of such endowments in documents of the Mughal period: Kozlowski, p. 40n.

[8] Judge Hari Swarup made the following comment: 'A Waqf-Alal-Aulad is "waqf" within 9.3(11) of the Act. But the entire properties do not come within the control of the [Waqf] Board but only such properties as are dedicated for purposes religious, pious or charitable. The crucial point for determination, therefore, is whether the entire properties are dedicated for such purposes or only to a limited extent.... Unless it is possible to determine the extent to which the property has been dedicated for religious, pious and charitable purposes, the entire property will have to be deemed to be dedicated to God and subject-matter of the Waqf.' Dicta of Hari Swarup, J., *All India Register*, vol. 64 (Allahabad, 1977), pp. 18–22, *U. P. Sunni Central Board of Waqf v. Smt. Hasan Jehan Begum*.

[9] In a court judgment concerning the famous dargah at Ajmer, it was pointed

holders of spiritual authority to remain free from worldly considerations in order to exercise that authority without prejudice. It is also a means of preventing an 'odour of sanctity' from forestalling any strict external supervision of administrative matters.

The trustees of Shah Jamal were drawn from the Shamsi family, which had maintained its collective identity through a system of family endogamy. When one died, the baradari assembled to elect another Shamsi to replace him. Arguments frequently occurred between incumbent trustees and other Shamsis as to the honesty and competence of their administration. These arguments persistently centred on the failure of trustees to use the rents and income from the dargah in a proper fashion. In short, they accused the mutawalls of lining their own pockets rather than fulfilling their proper function as guardians. In 1876, 1886, 1912 and 1914, a number of legal actions were instituted by members of the Shamsi baradari against Shamsi trustees in an attempt to transfer the duties to other, more responsible, members of the baradari, or to persuade district government as a disinterested third party to assume their responsibilities. The British administration, unlike its Muslim predecessors, attempted to separate itself from what it considered to be a religious matter and followed a policy of non-involvement. It did, however, arbitrate in disputes over religious endowments. No one at this stage disputed the right of members of the Shamsi baradari to perform the duties of mutawalli. It was explicitly agreed by the Shamsis themselves and implicitly confirmed by other Muslims through their demonstrable unwillingness to become involved in either the disputes or the administration. In 1914 this point was clarified by the then presiding magistrate of Aligarh district:

> if the members of the family of Shah Jamal were agreed amongst themselves as to the expenditure of the trust income, no person not of that family would have any right to protest, even if absolutely nothing were spent on the dargah in charity and if the dargah itself were to be allowed to fall into ruins and disappear.[10]

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out that the office of mutawalli was separated from that of sajjada-nashin during the reign of Shahjahan (1627–58). Dicta of Gajendragadkar, J., *All India Registry* (1961), Supreme Court, pp. 1402–1420, *Durgah Comm. Ajmer v. Syed Hussain Ali.*

[10] Judgment in the court of the district judge of Aligarh, suit no. 2 of 1913, *Niaz Ali, Mushtaq Ali & Asadullah v. Akram Ali, Niaz Ali & Mst. Saidun Nisa.*

Religious endowments of both Hindus and Muslims in UP had long been open to abuse by individuals who ignored their charitable context, transferred property rights, and sold off ostensibly inalienable portions of land and property. Complaints levelled at the Shamsis were by no means unique. Before the British period, some efforts to guard against major abuses at the most important shrines were made through the vigilance of some rulers.[11] During British rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and after independence in 1947, a series of acts were passed by central and state legislatures to attempt further regulation of waqf administration. In 1923 the Mussalman Waqf Act was passed, succeeded by the United Provinces Muslims Waqfs Act in 1936, the Central Waqfs Act in 1954, and finally, in 1960, the UP Muslim Waqfs Act. In UP the impact of legislation and increasing representation by concerned Muslims led in 1936 to the foundation of the UP Sunni and Shi'a Waqf boards which, however, did not really begin to exercise serious influence over the administration of waqf property in the state until after 1960. The UP Sunni Central Waqf Board (hereafter known as the Board) began to set in motion a number of legal actions after 1947, to be settled by civil courts. However, litigation is both extremely time-consuming and expensive. The Delhi Waqf Board, for example, spent Rs 200,000 of its Rs 1,800,000 estimated annual income during 1984–5 on legal expenses.[12] Furthermore, during the course of litigation the majority of incumbent trustees accused of mismanagement continued to use the waqf as they wished.[13]

Central Waqf boards in separate states of India had gained one important qualification with regard to government attitudes towards endowments. They insisted their administration was a religious matter concerning Islamic institutions and, as such, to be handled

[11] Formerly, Muslim rulers had kept a close watch on the behaviour of the sajjada-nashin, which was frequently a political appointment. In 1570 Emperor Akbar replaced the sajjada-nashin of the dargah at Ajmer (whom he had appointed three years previously) because of bad administration.

[12] At a 1986 valuation of Rs 17 to the £, this amounts to some £105,882.

[13] According to the UP Muslim Waqfs Act of 1960, sections 19 and 55 make it clear that with regard to waqf 'alal aulad the Board has the power to remove the mutawalli, but not to suspend him during an enquiry.

only by Muslims. The role of the boards was to judge the moral and social, as well as the legal, responsibilities of waqf administration, and to arbitrate in assessing what constituted an endowment and what did not. In return, each waqf would submit a maximum of 6 per cent from the net annual income of the endowment to its respective board. The right to independent, centralized Muslim administration of waqf property was readily agreed by the British and confirmed by the Government of India after 1947.[15] Unfortunately, the centralized nature of the state Board meant that arguments and litigation often took years to settle, while continuing to raise local controversies. As a result, the UP state government exercised a general supervision over the board with wide powers to interfere with its administration.[16] Local government officials were frequently obliged to exercise this authority, which they did with caution, or were appealed to by disputants in attempts to settle rival claims. It was a difficult issue for the administration, and continues to be so, since it raised the question as to what was actually 'religious', and what was associated with religion as laid down by civil law. These are not questions pursued in this essay. It is enough to note that the attempt to separate Muslim waqf matters from non-waqf and non-Muslim property disputes had two implications: it meant that administration of endowments became an important symbol of Muslim identity in India by creating a distinction between the independence of the individual and the independence of religious law; and it meant the power of the trustee over the resources of a

[14] Article 26 of the Constitution states that: 'Every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right: (a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.'

[15] State governments in Punjab, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have in the past superseded state waqf boards as a result of their internal dissensions and party politics. Indeed, the state government's right to interfere is clearly recognized: 'It would be clear that from the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century the administration and management of the Dargah Endowment has been true to the same pattern. The said administration has been treated as a matter with which the state is concerned and it has been left in charge of the Mutawallis who were appointed from time to time by the state and even removed when they were found to be guilty of misconduct or when it was felt that their work was unsatisfactory.' Dicta of Gajendragadkar, J., p. 1409.

waqf, once confirmed in his post, was absolute during his period of tenure.

Though controversy over both Hindu and Muslim religious endowments is not new in the Indian subcontinent, there has been some suggestion that attitudes towards the rights and wrongs of such behaviour have undergone a dramatic change. Derrett suggests the change is due to western concepts of morality based on accountability which have influenced the educated Indian elite, and are reflected in overriding structures of political action and civil law. Alien concepts, he argues, have thus given rise to a situation whereby 'the state is against swindles. But whether the public is so is open to question.' Derrett comments about Hindu endowments that 'the picture of the unedifying and selfish individual masquerading as a religious leader is so familiar to the Hindu... that a programme of turning him into a benevolent spiritual leader in fact as well as in theory has little actuality'.[16] Among Muslims there has always been a sense that those associated with a dargah are more than just administrators displaying different degrees of avarice, hence the separation of spiritual and temporal duties in the posts of sajjada-nashin and mutawalli. Moreover, the spiritual value of the dargah is much greater as compared to other Islamic institutions. While the gap between precept and practice is, as Derrett remarks, often wide, the ethos of social responsibility on the part of office-holders towards devotees exerts a powerful influence.

The institution of Muslim endowments themselves gained an ambiguous value in Muslim eyes: on the one hand they were associated with charitable impulses fundamental to Islamic identity, and with the financial and moral protection of religious sites. On the other hand, they had become synonymous with a reputation for cheating, or with a financial astuteness on the part of the donor bordering on chicanery, since by the creation of an endowment a donor could escape his creditors, avoid paying taxes, and prevent the dismemberment of property while still assuring an income for heirs. Moral attitudes continued to be a means for justifying actions, but what altered in Aligarh was the nature of those persons expressing such attitudes and the arenas chosen to display them.

[16] J. Duncan M. Derrett, 'The Reform of Hindu Religious Endowments', in Donald Eugene Smith (ed.), *South Asian Politics and Religion* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1966).

ECONOMIC RESOURCES OF THE DARGAH

With the introduction of the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board, and the closing of loopholes in land legislation, conflict at the dargah of Shah Jamal began to assume new dimensions. Upon its formation in 1936, the Board had numbered every religious property in UP it considered to be waqf. In its opinion the dargah of Shah Jamal fell under the category of a public religious endowment and was numbered by the Board as waqf no. 63, one of the richest and largest in Aligarh district. In 1947, with Partition, many members of the Shamsi baradari left Aligarh for Pakistan, leaving behind empty houses and vacant properties to be seized and auctioned by the district authorities. With them went many of the documents and farmans relating to the dargah. The Shamsis remaining in Aligarh had not formally been designated trustees by their predecessors, but assumed the rights and duties based on custom and hereditary practice. These rights were to be challenged. The Board demanded to see the accounts of the dargah, to be submitted to its central office in Lucknow. The new Shamsi trustees refused on the basis that the dargah was a waqf 'alal aulad, not a public or quasi-public endowment. Furthermore, they claimed any charitable donations to the poor or money given for the upkeep of the dargah were purely voluntary, not compulsory, actions, and as Shah Jamal was their ancestral place they were in no way answerable to the Board. While both the land tenure system under the British and the moral donate regarding religious endowments had altered, it was evident that the nature of hereditary rights in the eyes of descendants had by no means changed.[17] No longer was the relative autonomy of religious systems immune from change in the overarching political/economic system.

A dispute arose between the Shamsis and the Board as to who was responsible for administering the property and resources attached to the shrine of Shah Jamal. The intensity of the dispute appeared to be in direct proportion to the relative value of financial resources vested in the dargah. The assets came in three forms: one was the land attached to the dargah, notably the villages of Dhorehra and Jamalpur; the second was in the form of donations, while the third was derived from the sale of items at the dargah. While I did not learn the exact amount of land belonging to the waqf, estimates by its previous and current trustees placed it at several thousand acres.

[17] S. J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer* (Cambridge, 1976).

The dargah derives its main source of income from usufructory rights in land, commonly in the form of rents. Some of the land has been sold outright for building purposes, while some is leased to tenants for farming, residential, or industrial/business purposes. The use of land is potentially the most profitable and regular source of income. Donations are also an important source, but more arbitrary and intermittent. These take the form of cash offerings placed in the charity box at the dargah or of direct donations to trustees. Donations reach a peak every week on Thursdays, the most popular day of the week for visiting dargahs, and considered to be the most efficacious time for prayers. Amounts involved are usually small except during the week of the 'urs, or exceptional cases where a donor may contribute a substantial sum for personal reasons. The third source from the sale of cloths (*chadar*) to be placed as coverings over the tombs, of incense to be lit, and of flowers and sweets to be offered, is also small. Most of these items are sold by individuals unrelated to the dargah administration, though anything offered in a spirit of devotion should automatically become the property of the dargah, which may then be resold.

The importance and value of the economic resources of Shah Jamal have grown significantly over the past ten or twenty years, and coincided with agitation among different sections of the Muslim population in Aligarh for access to control of their administration. The growth of urban development has placed a higher premium on the ownership of land and property in the district, while government legislation in the form of land ceiling laws and zamindari abolition has reduced individual ownership capacities. Waqf is still one of the ways in which large amounts of land may be legally kept intact as one property. However, keeping property intact does not necessarily mean that it is more easily adaptable to new opportunities for economic advantage. Indeed, because disputes are so common with waqf endowments and so lengthy in settlement, adaptive uses of land and property are often missed.[18] The urban development of Aligarh has accelerated building activity, while growth of the urban population and subsequent pressure on existing housing and related facilities have created a high demand for residential and business premises. Much has been constructed in the

[18] I am grateful to Juan Cole for pointing out that formation of a waqf 'alal aulad has frequently contributed to the economic stagnation of its property. Because property cannot be divided between family members or sold, disagreements over its use are often intense, leading to an impasse in action.

Civil Lines area from money earned in the Gulf countries and Libya by the educated Muslim elite. Villages which used to be completely rural twenty years ago are now urban localities and prices of land have risen dramatically as a result.

Administration of the dargah's property has both advantages and disadvantages for its trustees. Waqf land, exactly like privately-owned land, has increased considerably in value and in demand for its use. This means the waqf could increase its income from rental of existing properties, and through the building and rental of new properties, particularly business premises. However, once property has been tenanted and tenants have established long-term rights of occupancy, it is very difficult for the landlord to undertake evictions, raise rents, or if he does, to obtain payment. Situations are common in Aligarh where tenants still pay Rs 5 or 10 a month for shop premises, and Rs 30 or 40 a month for residential purposes on waqf property, sums far below the current market rate.[19] Moreover, tenants often sublet and earn personal income from rents. If the original tenants vacate the property, sub-tenants can raise a claim to occupancy. If disputes over the management of the waqf are current and, as litigation continues for years at a time, tenants can take advantage of the disorder and establish rights of residence. The consequence is that actual management of endowments becomes complicated and laborious, with claims and counter-claims by tenants who may have been allotted the same rights to the same piece of land or building by different trustees.

The value of irregular sources of income at Shah Jamal in the form of donations is also difficult to assess. Some individual donations have increased in amount; on the other hand, numbers of devotees attending the shrine have dropped sharply because many people now prefer to visit Baba Barchi Bahadur. The income for this dargah in 1985 from its charity box alone was estimated at Rs 32,000.

FROM INTRA- TO INTER-BARADARI DISPUTE

The value of resources belonging to the dargah, both spiritual and financial, had been realized by several groups of people. Arguments as to who should administer such resources had been endemic and

[19] During the period of fieldwork up to March 1986, the cost of renting a small, one or two-roomed house in the city ranged between Rs 200 and 500, per month, depending upon the size and condition of the property.

showed no signs of ceasing. After 1947 and the demand by the Board to see the accounts of Shah Jamal, litigation had been set in motion, with the Board as plaintiff and individual trustees from the Shamsi baradari as defendants. This litigation continued for some thirty years before it was finally resolved. During this period, the dispute became not merely a moral one as to who was more or less honest in handling the affairs of the dargah. It became a platform for the growing assertion of status rights by certain sections of the Muslim community in Aligarh, and a vehicle by which their status claims could be made.

Changes in the implications of the dispute became evident through changes in the character of the protagonists. Until 1947, accusations of mismanagement and corruption had been directed against trustees of the Shamsi baradari by other members of the same baradari. After 1947 and particularly after 1960, the main thrust of opposition came not from Shamsis but from members of other Muslim baradaris, headed by Ansaris (or Momin Ansars). It meant the traditional hereditary rights of the Shamsis to the dargah and its property were no longer recognized as valid by other members of the Muslim community. Why did this change come about, and why had other Muslims in Aligarh not challenged the right of the Shamsis to control the resources of the dargah before? The answer lies mainly, I believe, in the increasing confidence felt by former low-status Muslim baradaris in relation to high-status Muslims, coupled with a general weakening of traditional sources of power and prestige formerly monopolized by an educated elite and based primarily on the possession of extensive lands and properties. The prominent role adopted by Ansaris in the Shah Jamal dispute, and a collective rather than individual character of expressing reaction, is indicative of this change.

The Ansari baradari itself has made great efforts to improve its social and economic status in relation to fellow Muslims in a number of ways. Formerly known as Julahas, or weavers by trade, the baradari adopted the name of Ansari or Momin Ansar in order to escape the pejorative status implications of their trade name, to dissociate themselves from an ancestry of indigenous conversion, and to align themselves with a high status ancestry linked directly to the sources of Islam.[20] To call an Ansari a Julaha nowadays is a

[20] Not all Ansaris are Julaha, or Momin Julaha as they are also known. Some bearing the name Ansar claim a true descent from the original Ansar of Arabia,

serious insult. The word 'Ansar' means 'supporters' in Arabic (singular *nasir*), and applies to those who invited the Prophet Muhammad to migrate from Mecca to Medina and thereafter supported him. The Ansari baradari in India today claims that among these Arabian Ansar were a number of weavers, from whom they trace their ancestry.

In more recent years, during the struggle for independence from the British, the Ansari baradari became politically organized, supporting the Congress party in its efforts to both remove the British and in its opposition to the demand for Pakistan. At the time of Partition in 1947 the Ansaris of Aligarh largely remained in the city, not migrating to the newly-formed Pakistan. Moreover, they constitute numerically one of the largest Muslim baradaris in Aligarh. Classified as a backward group by the government, it received favourable terms for business loans and educational opportunities from state and government agencies. The situation developed whereby baradaris such as the Ansaris are now in a position to receive more pecuniary benefits and political patronage than the educated Muslim elite. Instead, a new elite based on principles other than those of birth began to emerge.

The economic climate in Aligarh also began to change. A growing demand for many items, the manufacture of which had been monopolized by Muslims, led to the growth of Muslim-owned manufacturing units in the city. Many Muslims who had formerly been labourers managed through hard work to establish their own small-scale units of industry. These were mostly in the production of locks and building fittings. With upward economic mobility came the desire to establish a right of access to symbols of Muslim identity formerly monopolized by an educated elite, and to sources of assumed Islamic piety. This was not simply a process of 'Islamizing' behaviour; it was a desire to assume responsibility for and control over symbols of Muslim identity. Furthermore, after independence, various social, educational, and even religious institutions of Muslims and non-Muslims alike were acquiring

none of whom, they say, were weavers. The term Ansari as a baradari title was adopted by the Momin Julaha, gained currency from the beginning of the twentieth century. This has caused no little annoyance on the part of the original Ansaris.

social recognition. Many had been channels of political mobilization, such as Aligarh Muslim University, and were linked to patronage from powerful political parties. They had, therefore, become important status symbols.

Similarly, the dargah, through its links with Muslim identity and religious piety, became an important medium for acquiring local social status. Ability to gain access to status is commonly expressed in terms of education. The value placed on education and the belief that literacy acts as a key to social status is clear from comments made by one Ansari lock manufacturer in the city: 'These people [the Muslim elite] during the Muslim rule were educated and had influential positions in government, and they just didn't tell the Ansari baradari, who were very uneducated. So when the Ansari baradari started getting education, then we realized such things at the dargah were being done.'[21]

Among many Muslims in Aligarh city a sentiment prevails that the educated Muslim elite has demonstrably neglected its leadership role, abused the trust placed in it by the Muslim community, and consequently forfeited many rights in relation to that trust. This, at any rate, was the rhetoric of justification for subsequent behaviour in relation to the dargah of Shah Jamal. However, though the old order was not yet ready to accede its social status and authority to the new, it recognized a change was taking place. Its members felt matters were becoming confused, leading to unnecessary disagreements between Muslims:

> These Ansari people were all just under us. Thirty or forty years earlier they were very poor people, and most of them were depending on us. Now gradually they have become more rich, and we people are becoming poorer and poorer, day by day. And that is why a person who immediately becomes rich, his ideas and thoughts become entirely different. When I was young I have seen these people working as our servants. Now they don't even try to [give] a salaam to us.
>
> They think as if . . . we have made them slaves and they are now free... Actually we never thought them to be our slaves. I don't know how this question [was] raised in their minds.[22]

As far as the dargah itself was concerned, a transitional stage occurred whereby the old order struggled to retain its authority over the waqf, while the new fought to assert its control. In August 1977

[21] Interview no. 81.
[22] Interview no. 168.

the new finally won; and the Shamsis lost control over the dargah, its land and its resources. An eleven-man committee composed of Muslims from different baradaris was appointed by the Board and directed to administer waqf no. 63. No member of this committee, however, was formally designated trustee, though as a whole it was instructed by the Board to perform the trustee functions. The Shamsis continue to fight the legal decision by the only means left at their disposal, namely in counter-litigation, in counter-accusations of fraud and mismanagement levelled at the new office-bearers, and by holding a rival 'urs every year. This last tactic has led to a curious annual event, whereby two 'urs are simultaneously conducted at the dargah, neither group of organizers recognizing the validity of the proceedings of their opponents nor yielding the right to conduct the rituals. Such events question the theory that rituals are designed to unite people and demonstrate solidarity.[23] Indeed, in this case rituals are used to publicly demonstrate the superiority of one group or individual over another, the Shamsis declaring their traditional rights and the Board-appointed committee asserting the moral superiority of a socially disadvantaged group. Not only does this reflect efforts to assert claims of social ranking based on religious principles and of superiority based on moral attributes rather than class or heredity, arguments over the right to perform rituals during the 'urs indicate where true solidarity among Muslims in Aligarh lies—not in the *umma* (the community of Muslim believers) but in its constituent groups, who are frequently opposed to each other.

BABA BARCHI BAHADUR SAHIB

At this point I would like to make a comparison between the other major dargah in Aligarh, that of Baba Barchi Bahadur, in order to highlight some of the consequences of the dispute at the dargah of Shah Jamal. In recent years Baba Barchi Bahadur has emerged as a strong competitor for the attention of the Aligarh population. The contrast is most marked on Thursdays, the weekday most popular for visiting shrines. At Baba Barchi Bahadur there are ten or fifteen

[23] Patricia Jeffrey, 'Creating a Scene: The Disruption of Ceremonial in a Sufi Shrine', in Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), *Ritual and Religion Among Muslims in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981).

small stalls selling cloths, sweets and flowers, while at Shah Jamal there is one. The former has a line of beggars waiting to accept charity, while there are none at the latter. At Baba Barchi Bahadur people have to queue up to enter the shrine, while at Shah Jamal there is no such press of people. What has caused the popularity of the dargah at the expense of Shah Jamal, and why has Shah Jamal been unable to respond to the competition? To begin with, the historical background and internal structure of Baba Barchi Bahadur's organization is quite different from that of Shah Jamal, which suggests its popularity with the people is based on something more than the existence of a revered tomb.

No one knows the true history of Baba Barchi Bahadur, which is surrounded with even more hearsay than that of Shah Jamal. The dargah itself is a very recent creation, being built in the early 1960s and still under construction. In the first half of the twentieth century there was little on the current site of the dargah except a small tomb (*mazhar*) and one neem tree, which lie alongside the railway line about 100 metres from the main railway station. Occasionally local people visited the tomb to lay flowers upon it and say prayers. There were some stories about miraculous events connected with the shrine and it was customary for incoming and outgoing trains to respectfully halt by the site before continuing their journeys. Stories about the inhabitant of the grave abounded, the most common being that Baba Barchi Bahadur's real name was Sayyid Tahabbul Husain, the disciple of a Sufi pir of Delhi, Hazrat Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, who was in turn a disciple of the famous Hazrat Khwaja Mu'inuddin of Ajmer Sharif. In the 1940s a saintly man of the town, Hazrat Zorar Husain, began to visit Baba Barchi Bahadur frequently to pray and meditate. Previously he had frequented the dargah of Shah Jamal, but he felt a strong attraction to Baba Barchi Bahadur and had consequently moved his attentions to that site. Hazrat Zorar Husain was a very pious and respected person in the city, who had renounced the world, pursued a celibate and spiritual life, and devoted all his attention to prayer and the search for spiritual knowledge.

The story of Baba Barchi Bahadur's rise in popularity is really the story of Hazrat Zorar Husain's personal attachment to the site. This saintly man was so respected for his piety and learning that he attracted a growing number of people, both Hindu and Muslim, as *khadims* (servants) of the shrine, whom he directed

towards its upkeep. A series of building projects began, financed initially by Hazrat Zorar Husain and subsequently by donations, starting with a small mosque constructed near the tomb. This was followed in the 1960s with marble walls to surround the tomb, a large entrance gate, and a small room near the mosque and offices. Plans for further construction are still under way. Gradually the shrine began to attract more followers and established an administrative committee composed of devotees of Baba Barchi Bahadur and pupils of Hazrat Zorar Husain. In 1961 it was popular enough to draw the attention of the Sunni Central Waqf Board who consulted with the committee over its future administration. The Board officially confirmed the office holders who were elected to a managing committee. In 1966 it was decided to hold an annual 'urs which takes place in early October. In 1973 Hazrat Zorar Husain died and was buried alongside the tomb of Baba Barchi Bahadur. Today those visiting the dargah pay equal respect to both tombs, and celebrate the 'urs of both men.

Hazrat Zorar Husain gained the reputation not only of great piety, simplicity and learning, but also for causing inexplicable and miraculous events. After his death he is said to have appeared to several people, both in person at the dargah or in dreams, continuing to give advice and counsel to those who sought it. Although the name of the dargah remains Baba Barchi Bahadur, whose 'urs is celebrated with more festivities, it is really the reputation of Hazrat Zorar Husain which draws people to the shrine today. Since this was acquired within living memory, stories of miraculous events are fresh in the minds of devotees who witnessed them at first hand. The sajjada-nashin of the dargah is drawn from the patrilineage of Hazrat Zorar Husain, his step-brother, who visits the shrine regularly and participates in the rituals of 'urs.[24] He is not, however, responsible for the administration of the dargah nor does he deal with the financial arrangements of the income or building projects. This is supervised by the committee, composed of devotees of the dargah, who are unrelated to Hazrat Zorar Husain.

The dargah is economically entirely dependent upon charitable donations and owns no property such as that of Shah Jamal. By

[24] Because Hazrat Zorar Husain had divorced his wife to enable him to lead a celibate and completely spiritual life, his stepbrother as his closest kin inherited the role of sajjada-nashin. The stepbrother had the same father as Hazrat Zorar Husain, but a different mother.

comparison it is very poor, with no income from rents, properties or land. Nonetheless, in forty years it has outstripped Shah Jamal in popularity, as shown by the weekly number of visitors and its weekly income from donations. Donations are channelled back into the dargah, paying for the maintenance of the shrine's fabric and the salaries of three employees, two Muslims and one Hindu, as muezzin (the one calling Muslims to prayer), a person to lead prayers (*namaz parhne-wala*) and a cleaner. Other duties performed by individuals are voluntary. Most important, it does not externalize an opposition between religious values and economic advantage in the same way as Shah Jamal. Those associated with the shrine, both living and dead, are popularly believed to have the interests and welfare of the public at heart. This is reflected in the popularity of Baba Barchi at the expense of Shah Jamal, the proliferation of stories concerning miraculous happenings at the former shrine but none at the latter, and the public reputation of the mutawallis involved with each place. This seems to show that, although power and status can be individually acquired through association with the dargah, there is a public sense of discrimination between the moral value of the dargah itself and the public worth of its servants.

POWER, STATUS, AND THE DARGAH

The circumstances at the dargah of Shah Jamal as compared with Baba Barchi Bahadur illustrate a number of points concerning ideas about power and status among Muslims in Aligarh. There are two kinds of power related to the Aligarh dargahs: one is spiritual, concerned with mediation between God and man; the second is temporal, involving the administration of land and property. Although there is a formal distinction between the two, symbolized by the separation of duties in the persons of sajjada-nashin and mutawalli, there are also links to draw them together. Links appear when both forms of power are embodied in one person and the spiritual and practical functions of the dargah are performed by one man. Ostensibly the power of the pir should descend to his appointed successor, the khalifa. Instead it has remained in the person of the pir. The social status conferred by that power is thus not transmitted to a khalifa but to those closely associated with the pir and, in time, to the dargah itself. At Shah Jamal this means to the Shamsis as descendants of Hazrat Shamsul 'Arifin, and at

both dargahs to the trustees responsible for administering their material assets.

The pir's spiritual power confers upon him great personal status in the eyes of Muslims, a point recognized materially in the past by grants of land given to the dargah Shah Jamal and transmitted patrilineally to members of his family. We also see at Baba Barchi Bahadur how social status due to spiritual authority was transferred to members of Hazrat Zorar Husain's family by dignifying them with the duties of sajjada-nashin. Yet grants of property often raised dilemmas for the truly spiritual, who realistically foresaw the disputes which could arise over its possession. Many refused endowments or valuable gifts because of their corrupting influence, while others accepted them for the dargah or for their dependants, but not for themselves. The administration of a dargah and of waqf property became a task bearing financial and moral responsibilities, implying a certain level of pious commitment on the part of the trustee. In the past it was felt that those best suited for such responsibilities were those close to the pir, usually kin. The spiritual power of the pir was converted on his death into social status for those who had been associated with that power. In older, more established, dargahs, this status is transmitted patrilineally to the descendants of the pir, as at Shah Jamal.

In addition to the symbolic power of the dargah and the acquired status of the trustee because of his relationship to it, the trustee also exerts a very tangible authority by virtue of his control over the considerable financial resources of the dargah. This places him in a position of extensive patronage. He is responsible for deciding who should tenant waqf properties, for collecting rents, for granting permission to build on waqf land, for distributing alms, for supervising the maintenance of waqf and dargah buildings, for discharging the debts of the dargah and for purchasing commodities necessary for its smooth functioning. He is thus in a position to decide who to patronize in purchasing commodities, in awarding tenants' rights, and in permitting building development.

Nevertheless, circumstances in Aligarh demonstrate that the demands of status and power are irreconcilable beyond a certain point. When spiritual authority is given a material base, material values can threaten to consume the original impulses which led people to give deference in the first place. This is what happened at Shah Jamal, and explains why attention has been transferred to Baba Barchi Bahadur.

The popularity of the pir and the creation of a dargah rests upon the strength of his spiritual power. The power extends from the pir to other people, who in turn seek access to that power. The relationship of a devotee to a dargah is thus not one-way but reciprocal. People are drawn to the dargah for a number of reasons: on a personal spiritual search; through piety; to request the pir to intercede with God to bring about fulfilment of earthly hopes such as the birth of a son, or to obtain employment; to pray for cures to sickness or insanity; or, as has been rather pungently described as 'the mysticism of an intellectually and spiritually pretentious social group'.[25] Whatever the reason, people give to the dargah in a variety of ways. Some give their personal devotion, others their time through labour or in performing tasks necessary to the upkeep of the shrine. The poor give small sums of money, sweets and flowers, while the wealthy give large donations, land or building materials. The dargah is the medium through which the individual may perform deeds to ensure religious merit.

To gain merit is a concept familiar to both Hindus and Muslims, which reinforces the universal appeal of the shrine. It is also central, in a somewhat different form, to the major world religion of Buddhism. However, as Spiro points out, there is accumulated merit for the Buddhist in religious giving, but not in everyday giving such as to build a school or to contribute to the support of a widow.[26] Merit for Hindus to ensure a good rebirth is drawn from all actions. For Muslims, merit is seen in a different light again. To Muslims, the concept has two important principles, neither of which is connected to ensuring a good rebirth.

First, it is enshrined in principles of charity which represent social responsibility on the part of the individual towards the collectivity. Charitable acts are considered a true reflection of a *sharif*, or honourable, person. There are specific guidelines in Islam as to their relative value; some are compulsory (*fard*) while others are permissible or preferred (*mubah*). All forms possess religious merit (*thawab*) to a greater or lesser degree. The creation of a waqf, for example, and its scrupulous administration have a particular fitness for religious merit. To create a waqf is to transfer property to the name of God,

[25] Kerrin Graefin v. Schwerin, 'Saint Worship in Indian Islam: The Legend of the Martyr Salar Masud Ghazi', in Imtiaz Ahmed, ed., 1981.

[26] M.E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes* (California: Univ. of California Press, 1982), p. 98.

and income from such property should benefit not the individual but the collectivity. Contrary to the Buddhist case, merit is thus applicable to more general acts of giving, though to give through the medium of the dargah invests it with a more specific purpose.

Second, merit is seen as necessary to offset the bad accumulative effect of flouting Islamic injunctions in the business sphere. The constant opposition between religious values and styles of economic activity in Aligarh is thus regulated through gaining merit in other, more socially valuable areas. It is a way of systematically ethicizing social behaviour when sin in other areas is seen as practically unavoidable.[27]

The symbiotic relationship between devotee and dargah is maintained through regular rituals confirming their mutual dependence. These may be performed daily, but are considered more efficacious if held on Thursdays. They culminate in the annual 'urs celebrations which last an entire week. The weekly rituals are the *fatiha* recitations and *langar* distributions. A fatiha is a prayer offered in the name of the saint of the dargah, and includes several verses of the Qur'an. It literally means the commencement, or first part, in this context being the recitation before requests are made or offerings given. It may be informally said by individuals, or formally recited by the sajjada-nashin. Either way, it precedes the act of giving. Langar is the preparation of food for distribution to the poor and needy. Rituals are the practical, regular, reaffirmations of the relationship between devotee and dargah. At Shah Jamal these rituals had become neglected; langar was no longer prepared for the poor, no one officiated at the weekly fatiha ceremonies, while the dargah itself took on a dilapidated air and many of the buildings crumbled. People still visited the shrine, but their devotion was one-sided and hopeful rather than responsive and rewarding. It seemed the power of the pir alone so long after his death was not enough to attract followers. A constant reaffirmation of the spiritual power he once held was also necessary, and this was achieved through ritual performance and material organisation.

The symbiosis between dargah and devotee is also only effective if the power of the pir is recognized. Muslims in Aligarh face a certain amount of opposition from their own religious community over the practice of visiting shrines, and there has been long-standing

[27] J.P. Parry, 'The Gift, the Indian Gift, and the "Indian Gift" ' *Man*, new series, vol. 21, no. 3 (September 1986), p. 467.

opposition in India from factions, particularly from some sections of ulama, to the practice of venerating pirs and dargahs. The two most prominent schools in India representing opposing opinions in the debate are the Barelwi and Deobandi schools.[28] The Barelwis formally recognize and promote the existence of dargahs and the custom of 'urs, while the Deobandis consider them processes of degeneration of Islamic values. This is not to say that they are opposed to Sufis or to pirs, but they are opposed to the entry of unIslamic practices (*bid'at*) associated with rituals performed at dargahs, hence their opposition in principle to 'urs and shrine attendance. The view held by this body of opposition is that to pray for a saint's intercession with God for material benefit interferes with the individual's direct relationship with God, and places a human being (the pir) on an equal level with God. Veneration of pirs and dargahs are thus considered of questionable religious value or even blasphemous. In Aligarh the practice of visiting the dargah raised strong feelings among some Muslims:

Q: So you don't believe in going to [the] *dargah*?

A: *Bas, bas*, never, never, never. Never. This is completely *shirk* and as far as shirk is concerned it will never be forgiven by almighty Allah. It can never be forgiven. One who goes to dargah will commit shirk. Shirk means to share the powers of Allah almighty in one way or the other. They [the saints] have already gone, they are helpless to help you, and one who has died can never help you. Of course it is you who can pray for their sakes, for them, but they cannot do anything. They are dead forever.[29]

Nevertheless, such sentiments have not succeeded in diminishing the enthusiasm of visitors to dargahs, nor their numbers. People feel they are not giving directly to saints because they too are dependent on God. But, the argument goes, since saints spend a major part of their time in service to God they draw closer to him, and acquire a position to make recommendations on behalf of petitioners. To some extent the situation depends on compromises reached between the trustees of the dargah, the members of a silsila, and other representatives of Muslim religious authority, namely the ulama.[30] In Aligarh these representatives do not actively oppose

[28] See also Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (California: Univ. of California Press, 1982).

[29] Interview no. 119.

[30] *Silsila* literally means a chain, or line. In Sufi terminology it means the

the practice of visiting dargahs, and it is doubtful that their opposition would have much effect. Confrontation on this issue would result in weakening their existing religious authority, and only serve to divide the Muslim population even further. As the Deobandi school and some of its graduates are considered tools of the government (*chamchas*), implicitly they are felt not to have the true interests of Muslims (however these may be interpreted) at heart. The public credibility of many ulama is thus flawed, and their pronouncements viewed with scepticism. Moreover, because of sensitive relations between Hindus and Muslims in Aligarh and the active involvement of government officials in visiting both dargahs. the syncretic value of the shrines is recognized, and, while their attendance may not be actively promoted, it will not be contested.[31]

CONCLUSIONS

The dargah developed four characteristic features in India: first, its appeal transcended the boundaries of community and caste by attracting people drawn from different sectors of society. It consequently acted as a powerful syncretic force in a land characterized by variety in religion, belief and custom.[32] However, Sufism itself is not necessarily the religion of the masses but has an intellectual appeal directed at the elite. It is the power of the miraculous, of the

succession of spiritual leaders in a particular branch of Sufism, of which the Chishtis are one. It may extend to include those disciples, or murids, who are attached to a particular pir or dargah.

[31] In the case of more famous dargahs in India, political promotion of the role of the shrine as a symbol of national integration is more overt. At the 'urs of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi held in December 1985, the ceremonies were attended by the Lt-Governor of Delhi and widely publicized in the national press. The Lt-Governor said that the Sufi saint 'stood for a composite culture', and that his teachings 'will remain a cementing force among different communities for ages to come while propagating 'the message of universal brotherhood, love and peace.' *The Times of India*, 31 December 1985.

[32] David Gilmartin, 'Shrines, Succession, and Sources of Moral Authority', in Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Moral Conduct & Authority* (California, 1984). Richard M.Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid', ibid., and *The Sufis of Bijapur, 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978); Peter Hardy, *Muslims of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972).

pir's reputation for goodness in a world of evil which exercises a practical and emotional appeal over the masses. The association between the pir and the dargah can serve to bridge the gap between elites and masses of all religions by attracting both to a common centre in different ways.

Its second function, as Eaton points out, is that the dargah acted as a means of integrating local cultural systems into a larger one associated with the Muslim rulers, though remaining nevertheless a local manifestation.[33] Third, the dargah owned, and its administration controlled, considerable economic resources in the forms of property, land and cash income. Fourth, the shrine became a symbol of power both spiritual and secular–spiritual in the sense of association with God and fulfilment of earthly desires through acceptance of prayer (*du'a*), secular in the sense that economic wealth and social status could be transmitted to the individuals concerned with its administration.

Competition at Shah Jamal and the disputes arising from it make a number of points about the meaning of power and status among Muslims in Aligarh. There is a distinction made between the two, and owning power does not necessarily confer automatic social status, despite claims to the contrary, because there are further distinctions between different forms of power. Moreover, the dargah as a primarily Muslim institution embodies concepts of religious identity which have taken on added meaning in India today. Association with religious institutions is not just a reflection of personal piety, it is a demonstration of a willingness to protect the symbols of a religious minority.

The pir has spiritual power and high social status, but no material power. The trustee has material power which confers a degree of social status inferior to that derived from religious piety. Spiritual power attracts material benefits which in turn contribute to its perpetuation through the 'routinization' of the pir's charisma. Actual material resources of the dargah are not as important in themselves as what is done with them, how money is obtained is irrelevant compared to how it is used. Therefore claims to social

[33] Richard M. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid', in Barbara Daly Metcalf (ed.), *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (California: Univ. of California Press, 1984).

status through administration of a dargah's resources are viewed with some scepticism by Muslims. Real status lies with the pir, associated status with the trustees; the former is hereditary through succession of the khalifa and sajjada-nashin, while the latter is acquired and transitory. Public judgement as to whether status is justified or not rests entirely on what duties are seen to be fulfilled by those bearing responsibilities.

The Significance of the Dargah of Hazratbal in the Socio-Religious and Political Life of Kashmiri Muslims

MUHAMMAD ISHAQ KHAN

The dargah of Hazratbal is situated on the shores of the picturesque Dal lake in Srinagar, a city of great antiquity. Being the repository of the sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad,[1] the shrine attracts over a lakh of devotees from every nook and corner of the valley on the eve of two important local festivals, namely Miladun-Nabi (birthday of the Prophet) and Mi'raj-i 'Alam (the day commemorating the Prophet's heavenly journey, in which he reached the immediate presence of God[2]). Not long ago, thousands of pilgrims

[1] Abbreviations: RPD = Research and Publication Department, Jammu and Kashmir Government; CAP = Cultural Academy Srinagar; NAI = National Archives of India, New Delhi; J&K = Jammu and Kashmir.

The sacred hair (muy-i muqaddas) 'is fitted in an erect position in a quartz container. The bottom is held in a silver cap which cannot be removed and the top of the hair is slightly curved. The container is constructed like a thermometer tube, opaque on one side, and the holy hair can be seen only from the side opposite. It cannot be seen from any other position. At the top of the container there is a cylindrical lid tapering to an end. The container is mounted on a round, silver base. Both these parts are fitted into the main cylinder containing the relic. The overall length of the tube, its lid and the base is about five inches and this whole object is used for exposition. It is kept in a gold embroidered narrow bag fastened at one end by a thin string. This bag is wrapped up in a piece of green velvet and kept in a walnut box.' See, for more details, B. N. Mullick, *My Years with Nehru*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1971), pp. 117–18.

[2] The holy relic is exhibited on these occasions and also on the eve of the

would flock to the shrine from all parts of the Kashmir valley, carrying with them the flags of famous saints.[3] There is abundant evidence to show that for over the last two and a half centuries the shrine has attracted people from a wide area, and thus has gradually become an important element in the religious life of the people of Kashmir.[4]

Speaking in terms of social history, Islam manifests itself in the dargah of Hazratbal more as a system of cultural symbols than as a doctrinal system of the ulama. Islam, as Clifford Geertz observes, not only exists in scripture but simultaneously in literature, images, objects, and public discourse or ceremonies expressive of a certain conception of the universe: a belief that a perfect harmony exists between the nature of reality and our habitual ways of acting, thinking and actual imagining.[5] Owing to its multiform manifestations in actual historical situations, Islam has established channels of communication between high culture and daily life, and, while synthesizing the two, has thereby made allowance for diversity and individuality within its fold. As a culture, then, it would be wrong to consider Islam as the major cause of historical events, but, as Ira M. Lapidus perceptively remarks, 'Islam is not something divorced from, above and beyond events. It is precisely a way of conceiving, of articulating, the ordinary issues of worldly

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death anniversaries of the four illustrious companions of Prophet Muhammad. During the nights of Milad and Mi'raj the dargah presents a luminous scene, when thousands of devotees perform supererogatory acts of worship in addition to the loud recitation of *durud*, *aurad* and poetry in praise of the Prophet.

[3] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (reprinted in India) (Srinagar: Kesar Publishers, 1967), p. 293.

[4] Mirza Saif, *Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mahraja Gulab Singh* (RPD), vol. 3 (1850), ff. 51a, 56b, 1852, V. ff. 58b, 60b, 90b; vol. 7 (1855), ff. 146b; Charles Bates, *A Gazetteer of Kashmir and the Adjoining Districts, of Kishtwar, Badarwah, Jammu, Noashers, Punch and the Valley of Kishangaga* (Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1873), p. 160; Arthur Neve, *Thirty Years in Kashmir* (London: Edward Arnold, 1913), pp. 301–2; Ernest Neve, *Beyond the Pir Panjal* (London: Fischer Unwin, 1915),p. 231; Wakefield, *The Happy Valley* (London, 1879); first Indian Publication Delhi: Seema Publications, 1975), p. 157.

[5] *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1973), pp. 87–125.

experience—whether in moral, family, economic or political matters.'[6]

In the context of the observations made above, it would be useful to study some distinctly Kashmiri aspects of thought and behaviour as reflected in the local Muslims' veneration of the sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad. However, in view of the preliminary nature of the present study, I have focused on the meaning and direction given to social action by the dargah of Hazratbal, because it is a conspicuous element in the religious life of Kashmiri Muslims. An attempt has been made to interpret the facts concerning Hazratbal, not in isolation, but in close relationship with the recent Kashmiri Muslims' political resurgence from their centuries-old torpor.

THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY RELIC AND ITS VENERATION

Khwaja Nuruddin Ishbari, a rich Kashmiri merchant, is reported to have purchased the holy relic for a lakh of rupees from Sayyid 'Abdullah of Bijapur, who had brought it to the Deccan from Medina. Ishbari died on his way home from Bijapur in 1699, but the relic was brought to Srinagar along with his dead body, where its arrival created a state of reverential enthusiasm. So joyous and heart-touching was the reception given by the ulama, *fuzala'*, *masha'ikh* and *fuqara'* to the holy relic that they vied with each other to carry the dead body of Ishbari on their shoulders. Men and even women chanting litanies and *durud* flooded the streets and bazars of Srinagar to glimpse the relic. As a mark of respect to popular sentiment, Fazil Khan, the Mughal governor of Kashmir (*r.* 1698–1701), ordered that the relic be housed at a mosque in Bagh-i Sadiqabad, situated on the western bank of the Dal lake.[7] The place has since come to be known as Hazratbal,[8] the abode of the Prophet Muhammad.[9] Qalandar Beg, a contemporary poet,

[6] Ira M. Lapidus, 'Islam and the Historical Experience of Muslim peoples', M. H. Kerr (ed), *Islamic Studies, A Tradition and its Problems* (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1980), p. 101.

[7] Muhammad Azam Diddamari, *Waqi'at-i Kashmir* (RPD), no. 1843, f. 145a.

[8] See Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846–1947: A Study in Socio-Cultural Change* (Srinagar: Aamir Publications, 1978).

[9] Pir Abdul Gani Shah, *Jam-i Ma'rifat*, part I(Srinagar: Safa-kadal, 1975), pp. 3–4; *Anwar-i Nabi*, II(Srinagar: Bulbul Lankar, AH 1387), p. 2.

thus expressed his joy at the historic event:

محتاجان را بہ وقتِ حاجت طلبی موئے مدد است یا رسولِ عربی
تاریخِ نزول بایکے ہاتف گفت کشمیر مدینہ شد از موی نبی

(O Prophet of Arabia, to the needy in distressing circumstances one sacred hair is the sustainer.
A voice from heaven announced: Kashmir has turned into Medina as the result of one hair of the Prophet).[10]

Since the sacred hair was kept at Bagh-i Sadiqabad, the place became the centre of pilgrimage for Kashmiri Muslims. From several folk songs[11] and poems[12] composed in Kashmiri in praise of the relic, it is evident that there has always been an endeavour to attribute the privileges of Medina to Hazratbal. This explains the fact that every now and then attempts at diminishing the importance of Hazratbal in the general consciousness were made by the Ahl-i Hadith.[13] In fact, the 'orthodox' left no stone unturned in generating doubts about the authenticity of the relic.[14] But such attempts at deprecating the sacredness and venerability of the shrine have seldom met with success, for several reasons.

However much doctrinal Islam devalues the veneration of relics, human nature seems to require the existence of such a phenomenon. For devotees the shrine of Hazratbal, by virtue of its being the repository of the Prophet's hair, is actually a place of interaction and communication between the spiritually alive Prophet and his followers. It is a *sui generis* system of signification. The very layout of the shrine, with an object hallowed by its history and associations

[10] Diddamari, f. 145a.

[11] *Koshur Luk Baeth* (Kashmiri Folk Songs) (CAP, 1970), pp. 47, 82, 112; vol. VI (1972), pp. 115, 174; vol. VII (1975), pp. 167, 168, 169.

[12] See, for example, Pir Muhammad Amin, *Jalwa-i Muy-i Sharif ma' Haqiqat wa Hal* (Srinagar: Bulbul Lankar, 1964), pp. 4, 6; also *Majmu'a-i Na't-i Muhammadi*, part I (Srinagar: Farooq & Co., no date), p. 2.

[13] For a brief account of the origin of the Ahl-i Hadith Movement in Kashmir, see Ishaq Khan, pp. 107–9.

[14] Abdul Gani Shopiani, a well-known religious leader, published a tract to prove the Ahl-i Hadith viewpoint on the doubtful origin of the relic preserved in the Hazratbal shrine. See *Fath al-Tawwab* (Srinagar: Bohri Kadal, AH 1359).

combined with the popular practice of reciting *aurad-i fathiya*[15] by the devotees with folded hands, and, significantly, with their faces towards the object—expresses symbolically somewhat distinctive characteristics of Islam in Kashmir. This practice of reciting aurad in chorus and of standing during the concluding part of it is not only common on special occasions but even on each Friday after the congregational prayers. It is also common to see devotees invoking the help of the Prophet with their eyes fixed at the particular place in the dargah where the relic is housed.

A careful study of the religious behaviour of the devotees at the mere sight of the relic in special gatherings held on the occasions referred to above leads us to assert that the sacred relic has almost been personified by a people who, after embracing Islam, have not given up their ancestral practices of adoring holy relics—this is so natural to the human heart.[16] On such occasions the loud expressions of personal suffering and grief by devotees is particularly worthy of examination, both from the historical and anthropological points of view. As a matter of fact the Kashmiris, even after their 'conversion' to Islam,[17] could not avoid retaining the essential elements of the local ancient religious culture and ethos while adapting to Islamic forms of life and worship. Thus the harmonious blending of historical circumstances and Islam emboldens us to assume that the beliefs comprising a given culture have important

[15] For the importance of the invocatory prayers in Kashmiri Muslim life, see Ishaq Khan, 'Islam in Kashmir: a historical analysis of its distinctive features', in Christian W. Troll (ed.), *Islam in India*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Vikas, 1985), pp. 86–97.

[16] Huien Tsiang, the first Chinese traveller to visit Kashmir in 631, has written about the tooth of Buddha which was venerated by the Buddhist monks of Kashmir as a sacred relic. In almost similar fashion, the custodians of a good number of the shrines of the rishis in Kashmir have preserved to this day some belongings of various saints as sacred objects. Such relics are exposed to the devotees on their anniversaries. This important feature of Muslim religious life in the villages of Kashmir Valley will be discussed at some length in my research work in progress. 'The Regional Dimension of Islam in Kashmir: A Case-Study of the Rishis of Kashmir'.

[17] I have studied the history of 'conversions' to Islam in Kashmir from a new angle in 'The Impact of Islam on Kashmir in the Sultanate Period, 1320–1586,' in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 23 (1986), pp. 187–205. See also my recent article 'Kashmiri Response to Islam, 1320–1586,' *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad) vol. LXI, no. 1 (January 1987), pp. 87–104.

functions for the social structure and personality of the people and, indeed, continue to survive in spite of seemingly great historical upheavals.

The archetypal quest of every culture finds expression in journeys to places that embody the highest values of that culture. The following verses, in particular, are worthy of notice here to show how the practice of visiting Hazratbal forms a marked feature in the religious life of Kashmiri Muslims:

> Hurry up, hurry up! proceed towards Hazratbal
> It is there that the truth of the Prophet's radiance will
> unravel itself.
>
> What a blessedness! the sacred hair,
> [Which] is enthroned there with glory,
> The majestic king [the Prophet] has himself come there;
> Along with his four [illustrious] companions.[18]

The elevation of Hazratbal to Medina *thani* (second Medina) is also worthy of examination;[19] this must have sprung not only from the devotees' unbounded veneration of the Prophet but also from practical difficulties in performing the sacred duty of the *hajj*. Hajj was beyond their reach owing to the abject poverty in which they lived through centuries of misrule and oppression. A visit to the shrine would, at least, have reduced in the devotees' religious consciousness (the apparent difference of) the physical barriers between the '*Arab* and the '*Ajam*. This sentiment is reflected in the following verses:

> Whosoever has seen the sacred hair of Muhammad,
> Has had in reality the vision of the Prophet,
> [Although] he is entombed in Arabia,
> His sacred hair sanctifies the '*ajam*
> He reveals the eternal reality of his radiance only to those
> in Kashmir
> Who have an abiding faith and are spiritually illuminated.[20]

No wonder, therefore, that a devotee with a mystical love for

[18] Habib Lone, 'Mahbub al-Qulub fi Na't al-Mahbub,' p. 14. Although the date and place of publication of this tract are not known, the author describes himself as a *khadim* of Ziyarat-i Baba Payamuddin Rishi.

[19] Diddamari, p. 145. Pir Muhammad Amin, *Jalwa-i Muy-i Sharif ma' Haqiqat wa Hal*, pp. 4, 6; see also *Majmu'a Na't-i Muhammadi*, pp. 2–3.

[20] Pir Muhammad Amin, *Jalwa-i Muy-i Sharif*, p. 6.

Muhammad, at the very sight of the object (relic), feels himself to be under the influence of a divine agency or in the spiritual gathering (darbār) of Muhammad. While in a number of Kashmiri *na'ts* a visit to Hazratbal is depicted as a spiritual flight to Medina, the importance of the spiritual gatherings is repeatedly emphasized by the priests in their invocations on festive occasions. It is also interesting to note here that on such occasions a number of Kashmiri verses, in which various blessings for the Prophet are invoked, are recited in chorus by the pilgrims in order to obtain the Prophet's intercessions.

But spiritual gains were not the goal of all visitors to the shrine. Health, procreation, longevity, protection from floods, famines and other calamities were and are the fruits sought by pilgrims.[21] In a society where the mullah reigned supreme, people were made to believe that a visit to the shrine would secure the object of their wishes.[22] This is the reason why devotees, not unlike the Hindus, made (and still make) a great display of their veneration while approaching the shrine: lowly obeisances are made, hands are folded, and feet bared to the holy dust of the sacred precincts. Significantly, in a number of Kashmiri verses poets have expressed the yearning of their souls for a pilgrimage to Hazratbal with the main purpose of falling down in adoration at the entrance gate of the shrine.[23]

It is no surprise, therefore, that in course of time crafty, hypocritical and materialist custodians at the shrine have made much of the credulity, ignorance and innocence of pilgrims. They have also developed highly structured and ritualistic practices which continue to characterize the dargah life of Hazratbal.[24] In fact, the devotees, in accordance with customary practice, continue to make vows and offer gifts to the sacred shrine in return for the granting of desires. The walls of the dargah are covered with these offerings.

[21] For the recurrence of natural calamities in Kashmir, see Lawrence, pp. 212–20; Ishaq Khan, 1978, pp. 20ff.

[22] Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions*, (Srinagar Gulshan Publishers, 1983), p. 76. See also idem, 1978, pp. 104, 106–9.

[23] Pir Abdul Gani Shah, pp. 3–4; see also *Anwar-i Nabi*, p. 2; e.g. *Kal ba travai dedhi tal.*

[24] It is not possible to describe such practices here. One has to closely study the religious behaviour of devotees on Fridays, festive occasions, and the 12th of each month of the Islamic calendar.

Thus the devotion to, reverence for and implicit trust in the shrine of Hazratbal is more important to the religious life of a great number of Kashmiri Muslims than any special veneration for the Quran or its teachings. For them the Prophet is venerated with but little knowledge of his teachings; it is the sacred hair which protects against disease and disaster that is all important. The saviour role attributed to the relic for protecting Kashmiris has also been versified.[25]

What is worthy of note here is that even today gullible devotees are seen touching the hands, body or even the dress of the custodian exhibiting the relic in the hope of receiving a *baraka*. This reverence for the sacred hair and its custodians may be seen to have fostered what can almost be termed a patron-client relationship in a system of *piri-muridi* which marked dargah life in the past.[26] So tied were devotees to the custodians of the shrine that their services were required at every stage and the conception of a family 'priest' grew to such an extent that the pir was almost a permanent member of the household. In fact, pirs officiating at the various ceremonies and rituals at home and the shrine became an important exploiting agency in an organized manner.[27]

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO HAZRATBAL

From the social point of view the festive occasions at the shrine seem to add something joyous and memorable to the dull lives of the Muslims of the city.[28] *Shikaras* and *doongas* were engaged by the devotees on the eve of local festivals.[29] Tea and sumptuous dishes were served in boats; those musically inclined played on guitars and drums to the accompaniment of singing songs full of ecstatic rapture.[30]

[25] See Pir Muhammad Amin, 'Jalwa-i Nabi', in *Jalwa-i Muy-i Sharif*.

[26] This is still true of the pirs connected with other shrines in Kashmir. Thanks to the spread of modern ideas as well as the inchoate effects of a true religious education, a considerable number of people have now been able to free themselves from the chains of the so-called pirs. It is not, however, difficult to trace some clients of these pirs on festive occasions.

[27] Ishaq Khan, 1978, pp. 104, 106–7.

[28] Ibid., p. 103. Lawrence, p. 289.

[29] While the shikara is a small boat, the doonga is the larger one.

[30] *Census of India* (J & K) 1 (1911), p. 102.

Before the dawn of the modern era,[31] rural-urban relationship and even inter-village communication was extremely limited; hence social contact was often confined to small isolated groups. The shrine of Hazratbal, of course, provided a rare opportunity for Muslims living in rural areas to come out of their closed social environment and join fellow Muslims from distant areas participating in the festival. This social opportunity also had the indirect effect of making them think in terms of the pivotal importance which the shrine occupied in the Valley. Thus, while writing about the villagers' participation in the festivals held at the shrine, a keen observer like Arthur Neve remarks:

> These are the great days to which the people, especially women and children, look keenly forward; for not only is there the display at the shrine, but the opportunity of showing off their best clothes and jewellery, and of seeing the shops of the city and making their frugal purchases. A bundle on the man's back contains a few days' rice and condiments, and the wife carries a fat cock as a present to the moullahs.[32]

From the economic point of view Hazratbal offered opportunities—for buying and selling special kinds of commodities. It attracted merchants and artisans and good business was done. To those businessmen who found it difficult to sell their goods all through the year, the six fairs, coupled with the regular Friday congregations at the shrine, offered a suitable outlet for their surplus products. Even at present petty traders seem to do good business on such occasions.

HAZRATBAL AS A SYMBOL OF KASHMIRI MUSLIM IDENTITY

It is remarkable to note that the dargah of Hazratbal has, in the course of its history, evolved a distinctive ethics of its own which is reflected in the numerous poems written in praise of the relic as well as in the organization of dargah life. In fact an elaborate code of etiquette and pageantry, visible on the eve of festive occasions, as well as the influx of devotees from the vast geographical area of

[31] For the problem of transition from medieval to modern in Kashmir history, see Ishaq Khan, 1983, pp. 64ff.

[32] Arthur Neve, pp. 301–2.

the Valley, not only point to the integration of Kashmiri Muslims in the unified socio-cultural setting, but, as we shall explain, even in the political structure.

The importance of the shrine was recognized by Shaikh Abdullah during the heyday of his.struggle against Dogra rule, when he brought it under the control of *Auqaf*[33] in January 1943.[34] Since then and, more particularly, after his expulsion from power in 1953, the shrine became a ready-made platform for the Kashmiri Muslim leadership to further its political objectives. What particularly attached political significance to the shrine were the fiery speeches delivered by Shaikh Abdullah after his release, first in 1958 and afterwards in 1964. A brief description of the political role served by the shrine for almost the whole of the last three decades, not really studied so far, therefore seems to be necessary.

Paradoxically, the first attempt to use the Friday congregation at the Hazratbal shrine for vested political interests was made by the Dogra government in 1931, when some Muslim officers tried to dissuade the people from attending the public lectures of Shaikh Abdullah which were then held at the Jama' mosque in Srinagar. But Shaikh Abdullah's dramatic presence at the scene thwarted the plans of the Dogra officials; in fact he carried the day by exposing the evil designs of the government against the Muslims of Kashmir.[35]

A significant feature of the Kashmir movement in the early thirties was the mobilization of mass support through some of the prominent mosques and shrines of Srinagar. The Jama' mosque

[33] The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Trust (known as Auqaf-i Islamia) has spread its network in the Valley as well as in Jammu city through its control over a number of shrines and mosques. As its founder and chairman, Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah considerably augmented its income by way of constructing a number of shopping complexes. It is, however, unfortunate that despite its vast resources and the prestigious position enjoyed by it as an important Muslim institution, the Auqaf has yet to assume its role of furthering the socio-economic uplift of the downtrodden sections of Kashmiri Muslim society. It is, indeed, more concerned with politics than taking up the educational work of the Muslim masses on an extensive scale in a true religious spirit.

[34] *Khalid* (Urdu Weekly), Srinagar, 29 January 1943; *Nur*, Srinagar, 30 January 1943. For the history of the Auqaf-i Islamia, see Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, *Atish-i Chinar*, (Srinagar: Ali Muhammad & Sons Publishers, 1986), pp. 275ff.

[35] Shaikh Abdullah, p. 73.

was,[36] indeed, the first place in Srinagar where Kashmiri Muslims would assemble for political purposes. The policy of the government that kept the Muslims out of state service, heavy taxation and the consequent destruction of existing industries, forced labour, a law severely punishing Muslims for cow-slaughter, and the open oppression by the maharaja's officials—all these were the main issues confronting Kashmiri Muslims in the thirties.[37] Muslim leaders often met at the Jama mosque to protest against the actions of 'high state officials . . . trampling on the rights of Muslims.'[38]

It should be borne in mind that the basic foundations of Muslim resurgence in Kashmir rested on assumptions which were historically correct. After the Mughal occupation of Kashmir in 1586, the Kashmiri Muslim ruling class had virtually disapeared. On the other hand the Kashmiri Pandits, who were few in number compared to the entire population of the valley, were able to join the ruling élite under the four sets of alien rulers, namely the Mughals (1586–1757), the Afghans (1757–1819), the Sikhs (1819–1846) and the Dogras (1846–1947). The economic problems of the impoverished peasantry and artisans who formed the bulk of the Muslim population in Kashmir thus became a focus among the emerging educated-middle-class of Kashmir's Muslims. Unlike the elitist character of the Muslim resurgence in the rest of northern India, Kashmiri Muslim leadership did not project and further the vested interests of certain social classes. Nor did the Kashmiri leaders exaggerate the basis of Islamic solidarity or romanticize Islam's imperial past in India, as was done to a marked degree by the Indian Muslim leadership.[40]

[36] Although the Jama' mosque served as an important political centre in the earliest phase of the freedom struggle in Kashmir, it was actually the mosque of Khanqah-i Mu'alla in Srinagar which remained the stronghold of the Muslim Conference and it successor, the National Conference.

[37] See, for greater details, Ishaq Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, 1983, pp. 129ff.

[38] Crown Papers, NAI, Government of India, Foreign and Political dept. file no. 35p (Secret), 1931, fortnightly reports on the internal situation in Kashmir, report for the period ending 2 July 1921.

[39] For the role of Kashmiri Pandits, see Ishaq, *Perspectives on Kashmir* (Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 1983), pp. 6–10. See also my article 'Kashmiri Muslims in Modern History', *The Search: Journal for Arab and Islamic Studies* xx vol. 3, no. 1 (Winter 1982), pp. 61–86.

[40] See also Ishaq Khan, 'Kashmiriyat Ka Badalta Huwa Tasawwur', in *Nawa-i Subh* (Srinagar), special issue on Sheikh Abdullah.

However, one result of Shaikh Abdullah's emergence as an ardent champion of Muslim sentiment in the Jama mosque was the gradual eclipse of the ecclesiastical leadership of the Mir Waiz,[41] followed strangely enough by the combination of the religious and political leadership of Kashmiri Muslims in his own person. Consequently, and despite his profound faith in secularism, he not only got into conflict with the Mir Waiz family,[42] but, at a later stage, also with the Congress leadership at the centre.

Shaikh Abdullah was, indeed, the only potent force in this century able to influence Kashmiri Muslim belief towards adopting a secular view of religion, culture and civilization. He rejected for Kashmir a theocratic conception of the Islamic state; nevertheless he used the affective and conative power of Islamic symbols in pursuing his particular goals. In his several speeches delivered at the dargah and also in his autobiography, he exemplifies a high incidence of Islamic symbolism when he attributes the theft of the holy relic from the dargah to forces which aimed at undermining the solidarity of the Kashmiri Muslim community. The solidarity of the community, he believed, was based on the social and religious ties fostered by the shrine of Hazratbal.[43] So aware was Abdullah of the dargah's central importance in the life of Kashmiri Muslims that he apprehended serious implications for their solidarity should the relic be lost.[44] The theft of the relic created a wave of resentment throughout the valley; so it would be worthwhile to examine the nature of response which it evokes as an Islamic symbol in Kashmiri society.

[41] The Mir Waiz family of Srinagar wielded considerable influence over the Muslim masses before the advent of Shaikh Abdullah on the political horizon of Kashmir. As a matter of fact, it was the Mir Waiz of the Jama' mosque and that of Khanqah-i Mu'alla mosque who were well-known both for their eloquence and recriminations in their religious sermons. It was the Mir Waiz of the Jama mosque who parted ways with Shaikh Abdullah in 1933, after ably supporting him in the ferment of the early 1930s. The Mir Waiz of Khanqah-i Mu'alla, on the contrary, always supported Shaikh Abdullah.

[42] Far from preaching tolerance, both Shaikh Abdullah and the Mir Waiz promoted a factious spirit among their followers, divided into two groups, namely Sher and Bakra. The Sher–Bakra conflicts which ravaged the city of Srinagar for over fifty years, however, came to an end due to the efforts of Farooq Abdullah, who unlike his father, has never described the Mir Waiz of the Jama mosque as his traditional enemy.

[43] Shaikh Abdullah, pp. 747–8, also 283–7.

[44] Ibid., pp. 747–8.

THE HOLY RELIC AGITATION

In the early morning of 27 December 1963 the side-door of the passage leading to the room housing the holy relic was found 'broken open and both locks of the inner door leading to the sanctuary had also been forced open. The lock of the front door of the passage had also been forced from inside. The wooden box containing the *Muy-i Muqaddas* [i.e. the sacred hair of the Prophet] had been taken out from the small wooden shelf.'[45]

The news of the disappearance of the relic spread like wild fire throughout the valley. It is not difficult to recall how angry mobs began to gather the same morning in Lal Chowk and Badshah Chowk, the two busiest business centres in Srinagar city. All offices and shops remained closed. And within a short span of forty-eight hours people from all over the valley carrying black flags began to pour into the city. B. N. Mullick, the Intelligence Officer who was specially deputed by Jawaharlal Nehru to recover the relic, gives an eye-witness account of the people's resentment in these words:

> There was no end to the streams of people and all the main roads were blocked by thousands of people and the smallest procession was at least a mile long covering the entire width of the road including foot-paths. Administration had completely collapsed and no vestige of it remained visible except the armed political guards.[46]

The theft of the relic enveloped the Valley in gloom. So tense was the atmosphere that in a special broadcast to the people of Kashmir Nehru appealed to them to remain 'calm, patient and co-operate' with the Intelligence Officer for the recovery of the relic. So critical was the situation that Nehru even felt that the holy relic agitation might 'seriously jeopardize India's position in the Valley'.[47]

Although the agitation started purely on religious grounds, it assumed a political nature when the Action Committee was formed with Maulvi Muhammad Farooq as its chairman.[48] The Committee, while demanding the immediate recovery of the relic, brought to the forefront certain political issues. Among these was the release

[45] Mullick, p. 120.
[46] Ibid., pp. 128; 130.
[47] Ibid., p. 124.
[48] Ibid., p. 128.

of Shaikh Abdullah and the settlement of the Kashmir problem.[49] The holy relic agitation continued for nine days and came to an end on the evening of 4 January 1964, when the relic was recovered under mysterious circumstances. Mullick writes: 'I cannot describe the process which led to its replacement at the place from which it had been removed on December 27. This was an intelligence operation, never to be disclosed.'[50]

IMPORTANCE OF THE SACRED RELIC AGITATION

The sacred relic agitation was undoubtedly an event of far-reaching importance. Not only did it pave the ground for the ushering in of a democratic process in the state, it also brought about a salutary change in the centre's policy towards Kashmir. Mullick records Nehru's conversations in a meeting of the members of the Emergency Cabinet Committee in which Kashmir affairs were discussed:

> The Prime Minister started by saying that, even after fifteen years of association, if Kashmir still remained in such an unstable state that even on a simple issue like the *Muy-i Muqaddas* the people could be so provoked as to rise in defiance of the government, then, in his opinion a new approach had to be made and a radical change in our thinking about Kashmir was called for. He said that he felt disappointed that after all that had been done for the people of Kashmir they were apparently still [i.e. calm] to a certain amount of mis-government. . . . He also felt that Shaikh Abdullah still had a strong hold on the people of Kashmir and in the changed circumstances, no political settlement in the valley could be thought of without bringing him in. It was therefore desirable that he should be released. . . .[51]

It would not be too bold to assume that, by virtue of its control over the dargah of Hazratbal, the National Conference leadership has developed against the centre's attitude towards Kashmir a system of self-defence and self-preservation. In this context an indelible influence of the holy relic agitation on Shaikh Abdullah's mind, likely to escape the notice of historians, needs to be examined here.[52]

[49] Based on my personal diaries.
[50] Mullick, p. 142.
[51] Ibid., p. 172.
[52] The cryptic remarks of Shaikh Abdullah about the role of Maulana

It remains a fact that during the agitation the Kashmiri Muslim community showed its solidarity in spite of the differences among various religious and political leaders on some issues concerning the community. What is of significance is that not only the Ahl-i Hadith, in spite of their denunciation of relic worship, but also the Shias played an important role in awakening religious consciousness among Kashmiri Muslims. One can hardly forget the scene of the grand procession taken out by Shias through the city for the recovery of the relic. The procession was led by no less a person than Agha Sayyid of Badgam, the most respectable leader among the Shias of Kashmir. The leading role in the agitation played by another Shia leader, Maulwi 'Abbas, was by no means insignificant.[53]

Although politically, for many years after his release, Shaikh Abdullah remained *hors-de-combat*, he left no stone unturned, through his sermons at the dargah to bring home to his peopie the importance of Hazratbal as a symbol of their cultural and religious identity. Besides playing the role of a religious preacher at the dargah, he concentrated his whole attention on its construction. In his enthusiasm to rebuild the structure of the dargah on a true Islamic pattern, the Shaikh felt no qualms about demolishing the historical mosque built during the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.[54] This building, which was considered one of the best specimens of the famous wooden architecture of Kashmir, as a matter of fact, fell victim to Abdullah's megalomaniac desire to immortalize his political links with the dargah of Hazratbal. Shaikh Abdullah toured various parts of the Valley and particularly visited almost every house in Srinagar, raising funds for the construction of the new mosque of Hazratbal. On each Friday he would personally collect donations from devotees visiting the dargah, who,

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Muhammad Sayyid Masudi in the holy relic agitation are worthy of examination. 'At a critical juncture,' remarks Shaikh Abdullah in his autobiography, the Maulana 'render[ed] a great service to India.' His remarks about the authenticity of the stolen relic tend to generate doubts which, among others, were identified by a pious Sufi like Mirak Shah Kashani. Thus, he remarks: 'It is interesting that among those who identified the relic at the insinuations of Maulana Muhammad Sayyid Masudi, was the adolescent, Mir Waiz Maulvi Muhammad Farooq'. Abdullah, *Atish-i Chinar*, p. 746.

[53] Based on my personal diaries.

[54] Shaikh Abdullah, p. 279.

as a matter of fact, would also seek the blessings of their beloved leader, now turned into a *darwish*.[55]

Consequently, Shaikh Abdullah was not only able to revitalize the local affiliations of Kashmiri masses for the shrine, but even strengthened his claims for making it an organizational focus for his future political programme. That he was also successful in perpetuating the central importance of the shrine in the religious consciousness of Kashmiri Muslims is still evidenced by the large attendance of people at the shrine on each Friday, and particularly on festive occasions. It is significant that during the first twelve days of Rabi'-ul Auwal thousands of men and women from various parts of the city make it a point to offer congregational prayers at the shrine. Fridays following the 12th Rabi'-ul Auwal and Mi'raj-i 'Alam are grand occasions in the religious life of Kashmiri Muslims.[56] Over a lakh devotees offer midday prayers on these days. Such occasions have generally been utilized by Shaikh Abdullah and, in recent times, by his successor Farooq Abdullah, for a reaffirmation of their resolve to defend the special status of Kashmir. On these and other occasions the National Conference has rarely failed to use Muslim rhetoric in defence of Kashmiri Muslim identity, as well as in condemnation of communal politics in the country. At times the National Conference leadership has been severe in its criticism of the insidious designs of the 'communalists' in and outside the state for their alleged activities in destroying the 'Muslim character' of the state.[57]

It would, however, be wrong to assume that through the dargah of Hazratbal the National Conference works its religio-political ideology. Two points invalidate such an assumption; firstly, the National Conference has always induced the people to see beyond religion, despite its use of religious places for political purposes; and secondly, in spite of the strong hold exercised by the National Conference over important shrines and mosques, it has seldom sought religious, or for that matter even social, reform in Kashmiri

[55] Personal diaries.

[56] See also Shaikh Abdullah, p. 277.

[57] See Ishaq Khan, 1983. Besides Shaikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah and the Member of Parliament Saifuddin Soz occasionally, and the Imam of the mosque generally, have dilated upon the threats to the Muslim character of the state in their speeches delivered at the shrine.

society. However, its use of the Hazratbal shrine to buttress its claim to ruling the state continues to present a paradox. Consequently, the National Conference has, owing to its arrogation of political functions and prestige through the dargah for its policies, subordinated the role of the shrine to its claim rather than to that of religion in the strictest sense. No wonder, therefore, the Madinat-ul-Ulum, the only institution established by Shaikh Abdullah at the shrine for imparting religious education, has almost become defunct. The general level of training of *imams* in this institution has always remained low by all standards, owing to the Muslim Trusts' preoccupation with the politics of the National Conference. And, indeed, Auqaf-i-Islamia has earned a bad name not only for its politicking but even on account of its malfunctioning. An inevitable result of the twin roles played by the National Conference and its subsidiary wing, the Auqaf-i-Islamia, has been the absence of a stable social and religious life among Kashmiri Muslims.

But there is another side to the picture. Through the dargah of Hazratbal the National Conference has made much of the psychological genocide with which Kashmiri Muslims are threatened in the face of the Centre's attempts at undermining the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Thus it would not be incorrect to say that Hazratbal has created a distinctive approach within Islam in a secular state. It has not only sought to unite Kashmiri Muslims around the leadership of the National Conference, it has even motivated psychological commitment to the avowed struggle of the National Conference for the preservation of their distinct historical identity. That the shrine symbolizes the hopes of Kashmiri Muslims not only for countering attacks on their identity but even for keeping alive their centuries-old aspirations of living in conformity with their cherished cultural and religious ideals is reflected in the fervent invocations of the Imam of the mosque on each Friday.

Shah Waliullah and the Dargah

J. M. S. BALJON

In the milieu in which Shah Waliullah (1703–62) grew up, visiting the shrines of reputed saints was an established practice. In a certain sense, he owes his own existence to this custom, for we are told that, once, his father Abdur Rahim (d. 1719) visited the mausoleum of Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (d. 1136) in the vicinity of Qutb Minar at Mehrauli, where the saint announced to him that he was destined to have a son.[1] This news threw him into confusion since his wife had reached menopause. The inmate of the shrine then removed his perplexity with the simple solution that he marry a second time.

In his early writings, *Al-Qawl al-Jamil* and *Intibah fi Salasil Awliya Allah*, in which the influence of his paternal home is still clearly felt, the Delhi scholar raises no objections against this practice, nor does he make any restriction in respect of it. When discussing, in the first treatise, the *ashghal* (occupations) of the Chishtis, he does not want, so he says, to give an exposition of the *salat al-ma'kus*, the salat of the 'inverted',[2] because it is not *sunna* (a practice endorsed by the Prophet), and the statements of the jurisconsults (*faqihs*) are silent about it. The etiquette, however, which the Chishtis prescribe for entering a tomb, dealt with in an immediately preceding passage, does not meet with any unfavourable comment. The visitor; Shah Waliullah here explains,

should first recite the Fatiha whilst performing two *rak'as*. Next he should squat on his heels with his face turned towards the dead and his back towards the Ka'ba, and recite the *Surat al-Mulk* (in which the contrast is emphasized between the phenomenal world and the

[1] Shah Waliullah, *Tafhimat-i Ilahiyya*, vol. 2 (Dabhel: 1936), p. 154.

[2] i.e. in order to perform the *salat* the worshipper has a rope tied to his feet and his body is lowered into a well.

eternal Reality). After that, he should exclaim *Allahu akbar*, should profess *la ilaha illa 'llah*, and should recite the *Surat al-Fatiha* eleven times. Then he must approach the dead calling out twenty-one times *Ya Rabb* (Oh Lord), and pronounce *Ya Ruh* (Oh Spirit), driving this forcefully into the heaven, and repeat *Ya Ruh*, driving it now forcefully into his heart, until at last he may gain relaxation of mind and inner light. Finally, he should wait to see whether an effusion of beneficence from the inhabitant of the grave may flow upon his heart,[3]

or whether 'he may obtain, God willing, sudden flashes of knowledge (*kashf*) through the shrine and spirit of the saint.'[4]

When treating the ashghal of the Naqshbandis, the order to which Shah Waliullah at that time felt the closest affinity, he sets forth the method of acquiring affiliation (*nisba*) with godly people:

> If the godly man is still alive, the disciple should sit down in front of him; and if the former is dead, he ought to crouch down at his grave. Next, he should purge his mind of all possible distractions, and then lead after a while his spirit to that of the godly man so that in the end he becomes closely united with the latter's spirit and he himself is merged into him. After having come to his senses again, he will discover in his soul all qualities that constitute the nature of the spiritual affiliation with this godly man.[5]

In this exposition a description is offered of the rite designated as *al-tawajjuh* (confrontation), a technique to effect spiritual unity. A. Schimmel recognizes in this practice an early stage of religious degeneration as it is often surrounded by a magical rather than by a mystical atmoshpere.[6] But, without any scruple, Shah Waliullah visited as a young man, nearly thirty years old (a place between Mecca and Medina) the shrine in al-Safra ascribed to Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, the Companion noted for trustworthiness and ascetism. The great event which then occurred to him was that the spirit of the saint appeared to him 'like the moon on the wane in the third night'.[7]

It was during his stay of fourteen months (in 1732/3) in al-Haramayn that Shah Waliullah had seized the opportunity to go

[3] Shah Waliullah, *al-Qawl al-Jamil fi Bayan Sawa' al-Sabil*, (Karachi: n.d.), p. 74f.

[4] Shah Waliullah, *Intibah fi Salasil Awliya Allah* (Karachi: n.d.), p. 100.

[5] Shah Waliullah, *al-Qawl al-Jamil*, p. 102.

[6] A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: 1975), p. 237.

[7] Shah Waliullah, *Fuyud al-Haramayn*, 8th Vision.

to al-Safra. In this period, even more intense emotions welled up within him when he visited the tomb of the Prophet. In the ninth vision recorded in *Fuyud al-Haramayn*, a collection of forty-six visions he had been favoured with in the two holy cities, he gives the following vivid account of experiences obtained with this visit:

As soon as I entered Medina [for the first time] and visited the Holy Garden (*rawda*),[8] ... I saw the spirit of the Prophet clearly appearing before my mind's eye ... in the World of Prefiguration (*'alam al-mithal*[9]). ... Afterwards, I betook myself quite often to the Lofty and Holy Shrine. Then the Prophet used to show himself in various delicate figures: once in a truly majestic and awful form, a second time in an attractive, sweet and delightful shape, and a third time in an effusing condition so that the whole cosmic space seemed pervaded by his spirit.

In a work of a somewhat later date, Shah Waliullah argues that the underlying idea of the prophetical saying which goes 'Whoso calls down one blessing on me, God shall call down on him ten blessings'[10] is that

it is necessary for human souls to be the object of divine effusions and nothing is more conducive to it than confronting [tawajjuh] the lights of gaining divine access. ... The Prophet also relates that the glorification and seeking of God's benefit on behalf of him [i.e. Muhammad himself] are splendid means for [a soul's] confronting God (as present in all His greatness and love) ... [because] when the spirits of perfect people are separated from their bodies they become like billows rooted on the spot (*mawj makfuf*[11]) (so that, in case a sudden desire comes over the saints' spirits to return to the state of a simple body, this would not be possible) ... [in order that] souls near to those spirits may earnestly endeavour to cling to them, and a light in a shape that corresponds with those spirits may arise within them. An allusion to this is made by the saying of the Prophet: 'No one will greet me without returning my spirit to me so that I may reply to his greeting'. During my pious sojourn in Medina in A.H. 1144 I witnessed this state of affairs very frequently.

[8] Formerly found just before the Prophet's grave.

[9] Situated between the divine and phenomenal worlds.

[10] al-Darimi, *al-Musnad*, xx, p. 58.

[11] Here an antique symbol is used: waters of the ocean, representing the chaotic element in the universe, were 'restrained' at the time when God created the earth into a cosmos. See, for instance, Psalm 104, vs. 9; A. J. Wensinck, *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites* (Amsterdam: 1918).

Yet, at the time of his composing the *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, Shah Waliullah has already become aware of abuses that could result from visits to shrines. After citing the prophetical warning: 'Do not turn my grave into a festival site',[12] he declares: 'This is indicative of putting a stop to a corrupt practice found among Jews and Christians who turned the graves of their prophets into festival sites and pilgrims' places of meeting'.[13] It induces him to draw in the same work a sweeping deduction from the well-known prophetical prohibition to saddle animals for a pilgrimage except for the three mosques, i.e. the Ka'ba, the mosque in Medina and the Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem:[14] 'According to me, one ought to include in this prophetical interdiction also the visiting of a saint's shrine'.[15]

Later, his repugnance to the grave cult appears to have increased. In *Al-Khayr al-Kathir*, one of his later works, his statements on what is proper and what improper in respect of the care of the dead are made in a conspicuously guarded manner. He urges confining oneself to the following four activities:

1. Displaying kindness to near and dear ones, as this in a way amounts to a display of kindness to the dead one himself;
2. Paying a visit to his tomb and reading the Quran there; thus the bonds with the deceased are reinforced;
3. Acting as his agent. By giving alms or manumitting a slave or performing the *hajj* in his stead, one extinguishes an obligation for the benefit of the dead;
4. Asking God's forgiveness on behalf of the dead so that He may have mercy on him, may raise him in rank, and may close His eyes on his sins.

Any other action in connection with the dead, such as the recital of the Fatiha as a prelude to asking (material) help is of no use.[16] Asking aid in the form of goods supplied for personal needs is denounced: because of its plainly egoistic motives this is ethically reprehensible. Requesting spiritual help, however, is permitted. Hence, Shah Waliullah states, as something quite natural, that once he went to the grave of his father in order to take his advice on the line of conduct he should follow with regard to one of his

[12] Abu Da'ud, *Sunan*, XI, p. 96.
[13] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, vol. 2 (Delhi: 1954–5), p. 77.
[14] al-Tirmidhi, *Sahih*, II, p. 126.
[15] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, vol. 1, p. 192.
[16] Shah Waliullah, *al-Khayr al-Kathir*, Khizana 9.

students.[17] But fierce is his condemnation of 'Anyone who goes to Ajmer or the shrine of Salar Mas'ud [in Bahraich] in order to get an urgent desire gratified; [he] commits a sin graver than murder or adultery'.[18] Nay, it is equivalent to infidelity (*kufr*): 'People's worship', so we read, 'of their living shaikhs, or of their shrines if they are dead, is one of the worst diseases of our time. The foolish blindly follow the example of Hindu infidels who worship idols'.[19] In essence, the veneration of saints is due to a mistaken concept of God, for the usual course of affairs here is that

a man discovers in someone else eminent properties characteristic of God. And that is because it is in the nature of man not to leave wonders which he observes as they are, but rather credits a particular person with them. As soon as he has attributed a miracle to such a man, he begins to love him and to hold him in great admiration. Then he makes him take a place he is not worthy of and worships him, while he pays only momentary attention to God who is of no use to him.[20]

However—and this is what makes the matter so annoying for the Delhi divine—'we are not enabled to charge the worshippers of shrines with *kufr* because in this particular case there is no statement explicitly declared by the Lawgiver [Muhammad] available'. On the contrary, the basic rule of conduct in respect of visits to dargahs dictated by the Prophet distinctly says: 'I forbade you to visit graves, but now you may visit them'.[21] Shah Waliullah's comment on this is:

According to me, it was forbidden as it gave occasion for the cult of tombs, but as soon as Islam was firmly established and the conviction had sunk into people's minds that it was absolutely interdicted to worship anybody but God, visiting tombs was allowed. The effective cause for this permit is the useful purpose it serves: it confronts people with death so that they awaken to awareness of the shortness of earthly life.[22]

Unfortunately, in Shah Waliullah's day this liberal policy of the Prophet was rendered useless because the time of heathendom had recurred: 'Lately, I have seen weak brothers among the Muslims

[17] Shah Waliullah, *Tafhimat*, vol. 1, p. 10.
[18] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 45.
[19] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 63.
[20] Shah Waliullah, *al-Budur al-Bazigha* (Bijnor: 1935–6), p. 114f.
[21] Malik bin Anas, *al-Muwatta*, XXIII, p. 8.
[22] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, vol. 2, p. 38.

who . . . credit those who have no claim to these prerogatives with power of intercession and a being beloved [by God], as was also done by their predecessors. They snatch elements from the Hindu and Zoroastrian religions'.[23]

In a word, it is intimated that on account of changed circumstances one could be compelled to ignore a particular permitted line of conduct, even if authorized by the Prophet. It is true that Shah Waliullah is cautious enough not to say anything to that effect, in such contradistinction to what appears feasible in present-day India. In a recent publication Dr Harsh Narain, an Aligarh scholar, draws the bold conclusion: 'Radical Ijtihad to the extent of ignoring the letter of the Divine or Prophetic law in the interests of the changing human situations is ingrained in the very texture of Islam'.[24]

In the treatment of the dargah, attention also has to be paid to the ritual of *sama'* ('audition', i.e. listening to spiritual music with the purpose of inducing a state of ecstasy in the attendant). Almost every Western scholar of Indian Islam is fascinated by the spectacle of *qawwals*, musicians who sing while playing on a *sarangi*. They are, in particular, active in the vicinity of shrines in the evenings on Thursday, or on the occasion of *'urs*, the anniversary of a saint's death. On the other hand, quite a few Muslim divines are troubled by what to think of this.[25] Even when inclined to consider sama' an allowed usage, such a divine usually states a number of terms. Thus—to give just one example—after an extensive justification of the rite, al-Ghazali (d. 1111) ends with the sober remark that notwithstanding this it ought to be prohibited for most people in the prime of manhood and for all those who run after worldly pleasures; also that it has to be reserved for persons who are only governed by the love of God, and in whom by music solely praiseworthy qualities are awakened.[26] Shah Waliullah adopts an even

[23] Shah Waliullah, *al-Budur al-Bazigha*, p. 125.

[24] 'Philosophy of Ijtihad', International Seminar on Reconstruction of Islamic Thought organized by Bait al-Hikma (Delhi: 1986), p. 14.

[25] Somewhat less known is the fact that in the history of the Christian church the use of music in public worship had also been a subject of dispute. Thomas Aquinas and Luther were opposed to the accompaniment of an organ; M. L. Girod, *Protestantisme et Musique*, p. 112, and the Protestant reformer Zwingli banished church singing from the divine service; F. Blume, *Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirchenmusik*, p. 344.

[26] al-Ghazali, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, vol. 2 (Cairo: n.d.), p. 210.

more ambivalent attitude towards this practice so dear to Chishti Sufis. He acknowledges that by listening to elegant verses combined with delicious melodies and well-measured cadences wonderful predispositions arise in man's soul. The sounds of tambour and rebeck produce an effect as inebriating as that of wine. Therefore, the majority of people striving after ecstasy are very eager for sama'. But the methods which the Lawgiver (Muhammad) prefers for the removal of man's stolidity consist of listening to sermons, the recital of Quranic verses, and meditation upon subtle points in prophetic traditions or edifying stories.[27] In general, Shah Waliullah says in another work, prophets did not want to go in for the evocation of the senses. The reason why Muhammad himself did not practise poetry was its possible mix-up with religious exhortation. Both of them overpower the soul, but unlike poetry religious exhortation gives full scope to man's innate character (*fitra*), created in him by God.[28]

To sum up, in Shah Waliullah's views of the dargah a certain evolutionary process occurred. Born in an environment where various traces of popular religion are noticeable;[29] he at first accepted visits to shrines as something quite common, not liable to any objection. At a maturer age he becomes gradually more critical of this usage. And, finally, he condemns it in sharp words: 'What people have devised in the matter of shrines, taking them as grounds where *melas* are held, belongs to the worst heresies'.[30]

These changing attitudes in respect of the institution of the dargah are caused by, first, the independent outlook with which the Delhi scholar approached the issues of religious life and thought; and, second, the influence of the writings of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), the famous opponent of saint-worship.

[27] Shah Waliullah, *Hama'at*, chapter xv.

[28] *Fitra* is a central notion in Shah Waliullah's theology: the very principle on which God created mankind is that the human individual should come up to the authenticity of man: *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, vol. 1, p. 51. Consequently, good is all that is in consonance with human nature: *al-Khayr al-Kathir*, Khizana 8.

[29] In a family chronicle we read that by the end of his life the father donated him two hairs of the Prophet: Shah Waliullah, *Anfas al-'Arifin*, (Delhi: 1897–8), p. 41f. For other instances of belief in magic powers in his paternal home, see J. M. S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi*, (Leiden: 1986), p. 190f.

[30] Shah Waliullah, *Tafhimat*, vol. 2, p. 64.

'Ubaydullah Sindhi (d. 1944), the well-known propagandist of Shah Waliullah's ideas, takes for granted that during his stay in the Hijaz the latter derived profit from the works of Ibn Taymiyya, available in the Medinian library of Shaikh Ibrahim al-Kurani, the father of his teacher, Shaikh Abu Tahir Muhammad (d. 1733).[31] However that may be, it is an established fact that Shah Waliullah held him in high esteem,[32] and that he was not averse to quoting passages from publications of the Hanbali scholar without a statement of the sources of information.[33] So a most natural conclusion is that the perusal of polemics of the fourteenth-century theologian sharpened Shah Waliullah's judgement on customs connected with the dargah.

Still, his denunciation of this practice is not so radical as that of his predecessor. At any rate, he does not—as Ibn Taymiyya did—go the length of inferring that Muhammad's prohibition to undertake a special journey to holy places, besides the three mosques, includes visits to the Prophet's grave.[34] There is also no sound reason to reckon Shah Waliullah among the proto-Wahhabis on the strength of his position with regard to shrines.[35] In the Preface of his *Fuyud al-Haramayn*, Shah Waliullah qualifies the *hajj* and the *ziyara* to the Prophet's grave as the greatest of all God's graces.

To my mind, this remarkable veneration of the tomb of Muhammad has to do with the sharp differentiation the Delhi scholar makes between the roles prophets and saints fulfil in this and the next world. The function of a *wali* is very restricted: he cannot give effective guidance to the community as a whole. Many more people

[31] 'Ubaydullah Sindhi, *Shah Waliullah Awr Unki Siyasi Tahrik* (Lahore: 1945), p. 87.

[32] In a letter to his student Makhdum Mu'in al-Din of Thatta he affirms that in his opinion Ibn Taymiyya is among the most faithful servants of God: Shah Waliullah, *Maktubat ma'a Manaqib 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari wa-Fadilat Ibn Taymiyya* (Delhi: 1890), p. 27.

[33] See Mawlana Muhammad 'Uways in *al-Furqan* (1941), 370ff., and Qamruddin Khan, *The Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyyah*, (Islamabad: 1973), p. 90ff.

[34] Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taimiya's Struggle against Popular Religion* (The Hague: 1976), p. 15.

[35] Cf. EI², new ed. (Leiden: 1986), v, 1003: '[the Wahhabi] king 'Abd al-'Aziz (d. 1803) . . . permitted pilgrims to pray in the mosque [of Medina] but not to visit the Prophet's tomb.'

experience the wholesome influence of prophets, as they are nearer to God than the saints.[36] Besides, walis lose their miraculous power, the chief prerogative they possess, as soon as they die.[37] The significance, however, which prophets have for mankind does not end at their death. This is particularly true of Muhammad, of whose mission 'the main aim was to act as an intercessor for the believers and to serve as a medium for very special mercy on the Day of Judgment'.[38]

Similarly, Shah Waliullah's evaluation of sama', the ceremony so often connected with the shrines of saints, is balanced: surely, it may have a positive effect, consisting of a refinement of man's *sirr* (the divine, innermost part of the heart). More appropriate means to the same end are, nonetheless, listening to sermons and Quranic readings.[39]

[36] Shah Waliullah, *al-Khayr al-Kathir*, Khizana 7; *Tafhimat*, vol. 2, pp. 151 & 120.

[37] Shah Waliullah, *Tafhimat*, vol. 2, p. 75.

[38] Shah Waliullah, *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, vol. 2, p. 75.

[39] Shah Waliullah, *Tafhimat*, vol. 1, p. 44.

A Nineteenth-Century Indian 'Wahhabi' Tract Against the Cult of Muslim Saints: *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*

MARC GABORIEAU

'*La tushrik bi-llah; inna 'l-shirk, la zulmun 'azimun*' (Do not consider anybody as a partner of God; undoubtedly associating partners with God is a great injustice.)

—Quranic quotation on the cover of the Persian and Urdu editions of the *Balagh al-Mubin*

'Nowadays in Hindustan many followers of the Prophet have been engulfed in *shirk*/ . . . /I have therefore decided to show the people, in the light of the Quran and Traditions, the Right Path/ . . . /I have used the "language of Hind" (*Hindi*) so that all Muslim brethren can understand it/ . . . /

In the same way as the heathens worship the idols, Muslims started worshipping the tombs of the saints whom they believe to be as powerful as Allah/ . . . /

I beseech those who have read this tract, to read it to Muslim men and women and to explain it to them/ . . . /hoping that they will understand what is *tauhid* and will repent from *shirk*.'

—Khurram 'Ali Bilhauri, *Nasihat al-Muslimin* (written in 1823; quoted from the 1909 Lucknow edition, pp. 2, 13, 28–29)

The turning of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was in India, as in other Islamic lands, an era of reform and renewal. In recent studies great emphasis has been laid on movements with a socio-political import; the sociological thought of Shah Waliullah (1703–62) and his alleged political activities; the *jihad* of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786–1831) and his followers, the *mujahidin*, on the north-west frontier of what is now Pakistan; the jacqueries of the

humble Bengali Muslim peasants, enrolled in the Fara'izi movement created by Hajji Shari'at Allah (1781–1840), who rose against their mostly Hindu landlords. All these movements died out when, after 1872, Pax Britannica was definitively established in the Indian subcontinent (Hardy, 1972, pp. 79–115).

But there was another trend of renewal which has a continuous history to this day, albeit less studied: the reform of popular religious practices. This constituted another side of the activities of the militant movements quoted above, or the full-time activity of leaders less committed in the political sphere, like Karamat 'Ali Jaunpuri (d. 1873) (EI², IV, 625–6).

The present essay addresses itself to this second trend and deals only with one particular tenet: the condemnation of the cult of Muslim saints. Two questions will be asked: a theological one—what are the arguments used to condemn this cult? And a historical one—what is the origin of the arguments that developed in this reformist literature? Recent South Asian historiography has tended to ascribe a purely Indian origin to this movement of reform through the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi Sufi order and the Waliullahi school of thought. Is this tenable? Or is there not a part of truth in the views of the older British writers (Hunter; Hughes, pp. 659–62; Mathur, pp. 72–102) or Orientalists (Sh. EI, pp. 618–21) which lumped together Arabian and Indian reformists under the label Wahhabi?

These questions will be examined through the detailed study of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*, a short tract in Persian attributed to Shah Waliullah. It is available in several lithographic editions since 1890, as well as in an Urdu translation since 1964. In order to assess its content and origin, it will be compared to several other tracts in Persian and Urdu composed in India at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

1. *AL-BALAGH AL-MUBIN*, A NINETEENTH-CENTURY TRACT: EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

1.1 Some current views

South Asian Muslim reformists as well as scholars trained in western methods often present Shah Waliullah as the initiator of the movement of reform. I encountered these views under the following circumstances.

In his 'Memoire' published in Paris in 1831 'on the particularities of the Muslim religion in India', Garcin de Tassy ignored the controversy which had been raging for about fifteen years in Delhi about the lawfulness of the cult rendered to Muslim saints (Garcin de Tassy, 1831). He was certainly aware of the problem: in later works (Garcin de Tassy, 1870, vol. II, pp. 52–7; vol. III, pp. 32–7) he carefully inventoried this reformist literature, which is roughly contemporary with his own work. In 1831 he chose to ignore it. This is very fortunate: this 'Memoire', which laid the foundation of the study of Indian Islam in Western academic circles, remains the best description of the devotions of Indian Muslims to their saints; he used pre-reformist literary sources and could compile descriptions which are not easily available in the later literature; after the starting of the reform movement, writers would not describe so candidly popular devotions for fear of meeting the criticism of reformers. I encountered this kind of difficulty when I conducted anthropological fieldwork among low-status Muslims in Nepal and northern India. I met with a lot of resistance when I tried to reconstruct the festivals in honour of Muslim saints as they were celebrated up to the first decades of this century, before the reform movements made their impact.

The starting point of my search was the lively discussions I heard, and even took part in, during my fieldwork in the western half of Nepal between 1963 and 1968, among almost illiterate Muslim banglemakers. The question was: is it lawful or not to mourn the death of Hasan and Husain, the grandson of the Prophet, by building cenotaphs called *ta'ziya* and taking them in procession in the village streets, worshipping them amidst laments, dirges and mock fights, during the first ten days of Muharram? (Gaborieau, 1977, pp. 182–3, and 1982). The theoretical answer was: 'no!' This practice was sometimes interestingly opposed by an argument which did not point out the Shi'a origin of the festival (most Sunnis in India celebrate it). The reason advanced was that it was an 'innovation' elaborated in the Indian context in imitation of Hindu festivals like Holi, the spring carnival, or Ram Lila, which marks the end of the monsoon. The practical answer was somewhat different. They would proclaim to outsiders that they had stopped celebrating Muharram. Closer enquiries proved that they still continued; they loved too much this festival, which is much more lively than the sober formal holidays (*'id*).

But our interest is in the theoretical argument. Is this only a folk elaboration, as its historically false ground would suggest (Indian celebrations of Muharram are built on Iranian models)? Or does it have deeper roots in Indian reform movements? I soon realized that I was witnessing only the final end of one of the many ramifications of a long historical process. My material could only be properly understood by moving backwards into the past to trace the reform movement and the channels through which it reached the humble Muslim population of Nepal.

I left both questions unanswered in my previous publications.

The question of the channels is still unresolved. Roughly speaking, Nepalese Muslims were mainly exposed—through migrant labourers who stayed in Calcutta, Dacca and Rangoon (Gaborieau, 1977, pp. 178–80, and 1978)—to the teachings of the Deobandi school; most probably through the network built by Maulana Kifayatullah (1872–1952) (Metcalf, p. 133), for they mainly use his teaching manual *Ta'lim al-Islam*, the fourth book of which, entitled *Tauhid*, contains a condemnation of the cult of saints (Kifayatullah, Urdu text, IV, pp. 19–23; English translation, IV, pp. 22–6). The influence of the Ahl-i Hadith movement is also attested, as we shall see presently; but it seems to have been limited to the south-western plain along the Indian border.

The present essay deals only with the question of origins. The argument I summed up above contains two elements. One is a new awareness of the implications of the Revealed Law, the Shari'a: practices like the cult of saints, which were not questioned in the Middle Ages, now appear as 'innovation' (*bid'a*), contrary to the good custom of the Prophet and his companions (*sunna*), leading of *shirk*, associating partners with Allah, and infidelity (*kufr*). The second element is that these practices are all the more to be condemned because they make Muslims resemble the heathen Hindus among whom they live. The problem is not to trace these two elements separately: after all, they are both very common themes. Our problem is to find when and where the conjunction of these two elements appeared in the Indian context.

A possible track was suggested to me when I was still in the field.

There was, first, a booklet in Urdu (here referred to as the Urdu text) published around 1964 by an Indo-Nepalese *'alim*, 'Abd al-Salam Bastawi. Born in 1909/10, he was at the time ending his career as Head of the Madrasa Riyad al-'Ulum, a teaching institution

of the Ahl-i Hadith in Delhi (detailed biography by 'Abd al-Rashid Arshad in Urdu text, pp. 18–34; summary in Gaborieau, 1977, p. 25). It is a loose translation into Urdu of a pamphlet in Persian attributed to Shah Waliullah, entitled *Al-Balagh al-Mubin fi Ittiba'-i Khatam al-Nabiyin*. The translator, 'Abd al-Salam Bastawi, states that he completed the translation on the 12th of Dhu'l-Qa'da AH 1359, i.e. at the end of 1940 (Urdu text, p. 240). He also gives in the introduction a short biography of Shah Waliullah, together with an outline of the doctrine of the Ahl-i Hadith (Urdu text, pp. 3–18). This booklet displays the same type of argument as outlined above: it condemns the cult of Muslim saints as *shirk* and *bid'at*, and insists, as a further ground for condemnation, on the resemblance of saint worship with the idol worship of the Hindus. We have here, then, a conjunction of the two elements analysed above.

At that time, I also read the now classic work of Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (1964). When dealing with Shah Waliullah, Ahmad refers to the same pamphlet, *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*, which he quotes however from the 1890 Lahore lithograph with the longer title *Al-Balagh al-Mubin fi Ahkam Rabb al-'Alamin wa Ittiba'-i Khatam al-Nabiyin* (here referred to as the Persian text). In his summary of this text, along with another work dealing with similar topics also ascribed to Shah Waliullah and entitled *Tuhfat al-Muwahhidin*, Aziz Ahmad brings out the same kind of argument: the customs of the Indian Muslims which are not in conformity with the *sunna* were elaborated in imitation of the Hindus among whom they live:

> The danger to this role of finality [of Islam] is one of syncretism. This is a general weakness which new converts to Islam, especially in India, introduce into its faith and practice. To justify the continued use of pagan practices these converts seek the support of weaker authorities in the traditions of *hadith*; they even invent false traditions. Utmost care is therefore required to keep Islam free from *shirk*, associationism of all kind to the Divine Unity. . . . The Waliullahi movement of purification of Islam from associationism is parallel to Wahhabism though it avoids its extremism by a process of sublimation which condones such minor deviations as belief in the intercession of the Prophet, or visiting saints' tombs provided there is no danger of *tomb-worship which in India is an evil parallel to Hindu idolatry and borrowed by Muslims because of their contacts with the Hindus* (Ahmad, p. 209, emphasis added; see also Qureshi, p. 191).

If we were to follow the conclusions of the editiors of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* and of Aziz Ahmad and I. H. Qureshi, we would ascribe to Shah Waliullah the arguments used by South Asian reformers against the cult of saints. Is this historically tenable?

1.2 Al-Balagh al-Mubin: Not a work by Shah Waliullah

Recent scholarship has shown that many ideas and initiatives have been falsely ascribed to Shah Waliullah, particularly in the political field: his alleged interventions in eighteenth-century politics rest on a collection of letters of very doubtful authenticity (Baljon, p. 15, n. 1); revolutionary ideas were credited to him which are mainly a projection into the past of the ideals of twentieth-century nationalists like 'Ubaidullah Sindhi (Baljon, p. 197, n. 10). Such precedents serve as a warning: is Shah Waliullah really the initiator of the crusade against the cult of saints?

The subject is not alien to his thought. Scholars have selected from unquestionably authentic books of the Shah a few passages which correspond to the main themes of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. Such a selection is found at the end of a recent lithograph of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* (Persian text, pp. 119–28). Shah Waliullah criticizes those who make pilgrimages to famous tombs like that of Mu'inuddin Chishti at Ajmer, and excessive and unscrupulous Sufis. He also warns against the imitation of the Turks and Hindus, and advocates a return to the pristine Arab Islamic practices.

But this aspect of his thought—like the political one—carries definitely minor weight within the overall context of his work. In his actual life and writings he appears as a great believer in Sufism and saints; he credited his own father with miracles (Baljon, p. 2) and thought of himself as the *qutb*, the head of the hierarchy of contemporary saints (Baljon, p. 19). All these beliefs are not compatible with the doctrine propounded by *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. In short, we do not find in his authentic works any systematic and militant stand against the cult of saints.

Is *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* then spurious? There are in fact two further indications leading us to doubt its authenticity. The first is that its authenticity is far from being universally admitted in South Asia. It is striking that it is mainly—perhaps exclusively—accepted by the members of the Ahl-i Hadith (Nawshahrawi, p. 45; Ahmad Khan, pp. 28–43). I do not have data about the manuscript and

early lithographic tradition. But the two lithographs I have in hand—the 1962 Lahore reprint (Persian text) and the Urdu translation (Urdu text)—are edited by people who add *Salafi* after their name. This means in our context that they belong to the Ahl-i Hadith. The editor of the 1962 lithograph of the Persian text constantly refers in his preface and in his notes to the outstanding Ahl-i Hadith leader Siddiq Hasan Khan, and his famous work *Tiqsar Juyud al-Ahrar*.

The second indication is the style. The works of Shah Waliullah are written in a concise style with a coherent and compact argument. *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* is prolix, loosely composed and very repetitive.

For these reasons it is safe to follow G. N. Jalbani, who rejects its authenticity along with that of another book which deals with similar topics: *Tuhfat al-Muwwahhidin* and *al-Balagh al-Mubin* have also been seen included in the list of his books. I have gone through them both. The former bears some resemblance to his style, but seems to be a clear case of attribution. The latter is a work of a mediocre writer and is 'far below Shah Waliullah's standard' (Jalbani, 1980 p. 41). Two other scholars in the field, S. A. A. Rizvi and J. M. S. Baljon, in letters to me, have agreed with this view. When and by whom was it then composed?

1.3 The context: Islamic reform in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

To answer these questions one should recall some basic data about the context in which *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* was composed (Hardy, 1972, pp. 28–60; Schimmel, pp. 150–88).

Shah Waliullah (Jalbani, 1980; Rizvi, 1980; Baljon) lived in Delhi at the time of the decline of the Mughal empire. He was trained in the *madrasa* founded by his father both as an *'alim* and as a Sufi. A stay in the holy cities of Arabia in 1731–2 enabled him to broaden his intellectual curiosity, especially in the field of Hadith studies, and to enlarge his training in the Sufi path (Baljon, pp. 5–6); he was also granted visions which persuaded him he was appointed to be the great reformer (*mujaddid*) of his age. When back in India he wrote an impressive number of books in Arabic and Persian, in which he tried to reformulate the whole of Islamic learning, including Sufi theosophy. His synthesis was inspired by three principles: a return to the pristine purity of Islam in the light of Hadith studies; conciliation of the opposite views of the schools

of law and theology; a concern for social problems. He aimed at being someone like a new Ghazzali and a new Ibn Taymiyya combined, adding some of the mystical insights of Ibn 'Arabi. Under his direction the modest madrasa founded by his father grew into one of the most famous of India.

From the time of his death in 1762 to the Mutiny of 1857, the madrasa continued under the supervision of his descendants and disciples. His immediate and most famous successor was his son Shah 'Abdul 'aziz (d. 1824) (Rizvi, 1982). During the British repression that followed the Mutiny, the madrasa was razed to the ground; the staff dispersed to the holy cities of Arabia or to the qasbas of northern India.

On the question of the cult of the saints, the Delhi madrasa continued the moderate teachings of Shah Waliullah. We find here nothing of the militant stand expressed by *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. After all, this was not a novelty in the Delhi context. India from the fourteenth century onwards had produced at regular intervals reformers who condemned excesses in the cult of the saints (Rizvi, 1982, pp. 188–9). Such reformers were particularly numerous at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whether they were associated with the school of Shah Waliullah, or with the hospices of the Naqshbandi Sufi order, or the reformed Nizami branch of the Chisti order (for this milieu, see Rizvi, 1982; Troll, pp. 28–57; Metcalf, pp. 3–86). All these reformers avoided carefully the excesses of the contemporary Wahhabis of Arabia, the reports of whose activities reached India through pilgrims. The *fatawa* of Shah 'Abdul'aziz echo this controversy and testify to the moderate stand of the Delhi circles:

> Some of Ibn Taymiyya's statements embodied in his works such as *Minhaj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* are very alarming; for example his attempt to belittle the importance of the *Ahl al-Bayt*; prohibitions regarding visits to the Prophet's tomb, the rejection of the existence of *ghawth*, *qutb*, and *abdal* and the condemnation of the Sufis. Many other ideas like these are found in his work and I have copied some excerpts. Ibn Taymiyya's contemporary *'ulama'* in Syria, Morocco and Egypt have refuted his theories. Ibn Qayyim [al-Jauziya], Ibn Taymiyya's principal disciple, has made great efforts to gloss over his teacher's writings but they were not accepted by the *'ulama'*. My father's contemporary, Makhdum Mu'in al-Din Sindi [d. 1748], has also written a treatise invalidating Ibn Taymiyya's theories. The Sunni *'ulama'* consider them untrue, hence the Sunnis cannot be blamed for

his writings. (Quoted in Rizvi, 1982, p. 190).

Regarding the cult rendered to the saints, Shah 'Abdul'aziz had a very lenient doctrine: he considered visits to shrines lawful; one could go to the tombs, touch them, address the saints to request their intercession (*shifa'at*). He only criticized, like his father, excesses linked with collective annual festivals (cf. Rizvi, 1982, pp. 190–9).

But a more militant stand emerged from 1818 onwards in several parts of India; two movements are particularly important. One is that of the *Farā'idiyya* (EI², II, pp. 783–4), founded by Hājjī Shari'atullah (1780–1840), after his twenty years' stay in the holy cities of Arabia. The movement is nowadays mostly remembered for its socio-political content: India under British domination was declared *dār al-harb* and, in consequence, public prayers were banned; humble Muslim peasants were encouarged to rebel against oppressive landlords. But another side of the movement was the reform of religious practice, the banning of the cult of pagan deities and of Muslim saints and the condemning of all forms of Sufism.

The other militant movement was that of Sayyid Ahmad Brelwi or Barelwi (1786–1831) (EI², I, pp. 282–3); Rizvi, 1982, pp. 471–540). Having little ability for scholarly studies, he made a career as a soldier and a mystic. He first followed the army of an Afghan adventurer, Amir Khan, who was finally settled by the British as the Nawab of Tonk, in Rajasthan, in 1818. He returned to Delhi in 1817–18 and started his movement, known as the Tariqa-i Muhammadiya, with the help of his first two disciples Muhammad Isma'il Shahid (1781–1831) and 'Abd al-Hayy (d. 1828). They wrote down his teachings in two books in Persian: the *Sirat al-Mustaqim* (1817–18) and the *Radd al-Ishrak* (around 1822). The first part of the latter was soon translated into Urdu and published under the title of *Taqwiyat al-Iman* (see J.R.C. and Shahamat Ali). These books condemn violently all forms of saint worship and all the excesses of Sufism. But theoretical condemnation was not enough. The Sayyid and his disciples started preaching in Delhi and touring the countryside in the whole of the Gangetic plain, going to humble folk like weavers and brickmakers, urging them to reform their religious practice and to destroy cult objects like ta'ziyas. The Sayyid made a pilgrimage to Mecca with 753 of his disciples in 1822–3. He preached his doctrine there, met Muhammad ibn 'Ali Shaukani (d. 1836–7) and made an oath of *jihād*. When

back in India he embarked in 1826 in a jihad against the Sikhs in the north-western frontier and created a short-lived Islamic state which he ruled as Amir al-Mu'minin. The hostility of the local Afghan Muslim tribesmen, who objected to his interference in their religious and social customs, facilitated the annihilation of this religious state by a Sikh army in 1831. Ironically, his alleged tomb at Balakot is worshipped to this day—as is Ibn Taymiya's tomb in Damascus.

It is still not known how the movement of Sayyid Ahmad Brelwi originated. British authors in the nineteenth century, as well as his Muslim opponents in India, styled him a *wahhabi*. Recent South Asian historiography in India and Pakistan has insisted on local inspiration (Mohiuddin Ahmad, pp. 98–101). The question, however, remains unsolved. There is clearly no continuity with the Waliullahi school, which is more lenient and less militant, and the writings of which were addressed to a select audience of literati. On the other hand, a direct connection with the Arabian Wahhabis is difficult to prove. The doctrine of the Sayyid was already fixed before he left for his pilgrimage to Mecca. Room must be left for individual inspiration: Sayyid Ahmad was neither a scholar nor a real politician; he was an inspired man. But his originality does not explain everything: one cannot help being struck by the similarities between his teachings and those of the Arabian Wahhabis, except for the minimal Sufi dimension he preserved. On the question of the cult of saints, his teachings are as radical as those of the Wahhabis. It seems probable that he was acquainted with them through reports of pilgrims returning from Arabia, (Rizvi, 1982, p. 190), or through literature, or both. The second part of this essay substantiates this assumption.

After 1857 the heritage of the Delhi school diverged into three movements, all of which claimed to be the authentic inheritors of both Shah Waliullah and Sayyid Ahmad Brelwi (Metcalf). A moderate one, which I call traditionalist, crystallized in the Deoband seminary (founded 1867). While preaching reform of customs, particularly of the cult of saints, it remained within the limits of the Hanafi school of law and of a purified version of eclectic Sufism. A minority modernist current, headed by Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–98), sought to find a common ground with Western rationalist thought through the medium of the medieval *falsafa*, particularly Ibn Rushd (Troll, p. 191–3; 216–17). These first two movements were cautious not to run into conflict with the British authorities.

A third current antagonized both the traditionalists and the modernists as well as the British. This was the Ahl-i Hadith movement (EI², I, pp. 259–60; Metcalf, pp. 268–96). The Ahl-i Hadith claimed to be the real heirs of Sayyid Ahmad Brelwi in his militant stand against the cult of saints, as well as in his rejection of the *taqlid* of the schools of Law and in his doctrine of jihad. The only way they depart from the inspiration of the Sayyid is their aloofness from the spirit of Sufism. They are technically known as Ahl-i Hadith because they admit no source of authority but the Quran and Hadith; they reject the consensus (*ijma'*) of the scholars; they refuse to be bound by the taqlid, i.e. submission to the rulings established by the various recognized schools of Law; hence they are also called *ghair-muqallid*, i.e. those who do not follow the taqlid. They prefer to call themselves *salafi*. They are called by their opponents 'wahhabi', a polemical word rather than a descriptive epithet, since it can be applied to any reformist whether he belongs to this movement or not.

1.4 Al-Balagh al-Mubin, a nineteenth-century text

It is now possible to date, approximately, *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. Three conclusions emerge from the foregoing data.

From a preliminary examination of its content, it appears that *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* cannot be the work of Shah Waliullah, nor of his son Shah 'Abdul'aziz. It reflects radical teachings which appeared in India only after 1818, in the circles of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi and his disciples. But it was composed prior to the first lithograph which appeared 'in Lahore in 1890 or before, edited by a certain Faqir Allah, bookseller in the Kashmiri bazar, who printed it at his own "*Muhammadi*" Press' (Persian text, p. 3).

Second, it was purposely forged by people who wanted to avail themselves of the undisputed authority of Shah Waliullah. For this reason the pamphlet was written in Persian, whereas Urdu had become, by that time, the usual medium for such controversies. Their aim was most probably to silence opponents who objected to the criticism of the most radical reformists against the cult of saints. It is one of the many pamphlets that are classified as 'wahhabi' literature (Qeyamuddin Ahmad).

Third, some questions remain as to the date and the authorship of the book. Was it composed after 1857 by someone belonging to the Ahl-i Hadith? This would seem likely since they have acquired

the monopoly of its diffusion. Or was it composed, earlier, in the circle of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi and, later, approximated by the Ahl-i Hadith? A thorough examination of its content will enable us to answer these remaining questions.

2. AL-BALAGH AL-MUBIN, *A MID-NINETEENTH-CENTURY WAHHABI TRACT: INTERNAL EVIDENCE*

2.1 An outline of its content

The object of the work is clearly stated in the preamble:

> This treatise, called *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*, explains the verses of the Quran, the Traditions (*hadith*) of the Prophet and the Traditions (*athar*) of his Companions as well as the sayings (*akhbar*) of the great saints (*awliya'-i 'azam*), in the hope that Allah may extend His mercy to the community of His Prophet and dispel the schism (*fitna*) which has spread among the Muslim masses because of their association with the Hindu polytheists (*mushrikan-i hunud*), confirming this verse of the Quran [in Arabic]: 'Most of the people, although they believe in Allah, associate partners with Him' (12: 106).
>
> This treatise has been written so that Allah [in Arabic] 'may prove right what is right, and prove wrong what is wrong, even if the wrong-doers are displeased'; this is the promise of Allah. [. . .] This schism is the worship of tombs (*gor-parasti*). These tomb worshippers are also called 'saint-worshippers' (*pir-parast*). These tomb worshippers consider their abominable cult as better than obligatory or commendable ritual acts (*'ibadat*); they think that they can replace all obligatory rituals; reversely they do not think that any obligatory ritual can replace the worship of tombs (Persian text, pp. 7–8; Urdu text, pp. 35–7).

The book is so loosely composed that it is difficult to give an accurate summary. This difficulty was felt by the editors of both the Persian text and the Urdu translation, who placed subtitles at random and not in the same places. The work has less a coherent argument than an accumulation of sermons, short treatises and controversies. It is a patchwork of fragments of possibly diverse origins. Rather than attempt to summarize the book, we will give an inventory of the various themes treated in the order they generally appear in the various parts of the tract. These themes may be classified under the following five headings:

1. First a catalogue of the objectionable practices of Indian

Muslims connected with the cult of saints.

2. They are compared with the objectionable practices of Heathens, Jews, Christians and deviant Muslims, which are mentioned in the classical Islamic literature.

3. Various authorities are quoted which condemn the practices mentioned under the second heading.

4. On the basis of these comparisons (second heading) and of these authorities (third heading), the practices of Indian Muslims are condemned as shirk and bid'a.

5. Finally, the author expounds the correct way of seeking the mediation (*wasila*) of saints as opposed to the belief in intercession (*shifa'a*) adhered to by the saint-worshippers.

2.2 *Objectionable practices of Indian Muslims*

An inventory of the objectionable practices will enable us to define more precisely the purpose of the author of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. For brevity, the historical and ethnographical context is not alluded to; ample evidence is now available on the subject (Garcin de Tassy, 1831; Herklots; Digby; Eaton; Gaborieau 1975, 1983a and 1986c).

Worship of dead saints: The book denounces all forms of cults directly addressed to dead saints, who are supposed to reside in their tombs. People address prayers of supplication (*du'a*) and make vows (*nadhr o niyaz*) to them in order to receive specific favours. These devotions may be performed individually, as is often mentioned in the book. But greater emphasis is given to collective devotions which are classified—as we shall see presently—according to the terminology of Ibn Taymiyya. These collective devotions take the form of a festival (*'id*) which is celebrated on a fixed day (*'id zamani*) and even at a fixed place (*'id makani*). The fixed day in South Asia is usually the anniversary of the death of the saint; it is called 'urs, literally marriage festivities, for in Sufi theosophy death is the mystical union of the soul, considered as a woman, to Allah who is her beloved.

A description of such annual festivals occurs at the beginning of the book:

> When they celebrate the death anniversary of a saint (*buzurg*), they come in crowds from far and near to his tomb; and reaching there on the day of the 'urs, they perform more devotions than they do for obligatory rituals. To solve their worldly problems, they address

their supplications to the tombs / . . . / They pray to the saint in his tomb to ask for children and food; they offer costly veils for the tomb, sprinkle perfume on it, burn incense; thinking it meritorious they adorn the tomb, light lamps; they think that with this superfluous expenditure, they will please the saint who resides in the tomb and will reach his proximity (*qurbat*). They thus do thousands of such acts in the same way as the Hindu polytheists do for their idols (*asnam*). (Persian text, p. 8: Urdu text, pp. 37–8).

Such descriptions occur again and again in the book; to quote the last one:

The tomb worshippers adore the tombs in the same way as one worships Allah in the Holy Ka' ba. For instance, they spread on them covers and all kinds of veils of all colours; they kiss them; they circumambulate them reciting vocal or silent *dhikr*; they make vows to them; they sacrifice animals in their names; they consider the water used to wash them as a benediction (*tabarruk*) comparable to the water of the Zamzam well. They consider that seeing, or making a pilgrimage to, the tomb of a saint (*pir*) is an act of worship comparable to seeing the Holy Ka'ba. They consider the tombs as *qibla* for the prayer; they think that it is better to worship there than in any other place. (Persian text, p. 77; Urdu text, p. 159).

Other descriptions scattered between these two quotations mention further details (see Persian text, pp. 27ff, 34ff, 57–65; Urdu text pp. 70–2; 82 ff; 125–35), notably, the presence of women, the coming to the tombs of pilgrims in processions with standards, musicians and dancing girls; fairs with games and dances; the drinking of alcohol and the consumption of drugs; recitation of canonical prayers at the tombs, taking away as relics (*tabarruk*) parts of the offerings, or a bit of the veil of the tombs, or a handful of earth.

The author classifies in the same category as the festivals for the Sunni saints those celebrated for the Shi'a imams, like the birthday of 'Ali on the twelfth of Rajab; the *'id al-ghadir* on the eighteenth of Dhu'l-Hijja, commemorating the appointment of Ali as the Commander of the Faithful; and the first ten days of Muharram when the martyrdom of Husain is commemorated.

One puzzling omission in our text is the celebration of the Maulid al-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, which had long been established in the Indian subcontinent as elsewhere in the Muslim world. It had already been condemned by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi; it was again to be condemned by the Deobandis, who

used arguments similar to those employed in our text against the celebration of the birthday of Ali: For instance,

in the *Al-Barahin al-Qati'a* (p. 47), written by Gangohi but ascribed to Khalil Ahmad, the current celebration of the Prophet's birthday is compared to the Hindu customs regarding the birth of Krishna. This evoked the rage of Ahmad Rida Khan of Bareilly (see his *Al-Daula al-Makkiya*, Karachi, 1976, pp. 114 and 116) who brands the Deobandis as Wahhabis and wants to maintain the institute of *Maulid al-Nabi*. (Information supplied by J. M. S. Baljon; for further information on this controversy, see Metcalf).

Why did the author of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* omit listing Maulid al-Nabi among the condemned celebrations? It cannot be an oversight: Ibn Taymiyya had already produced arguments against it. Did he accept it? Or did he avoid mentioning it for fear of raising a controversy? It should also be recalled that Shah Waliullah is silent about it.

Our text describes also the whole complex of institutions which have grown around the tombs, which the author calls in a derogatory way *qabr* or *gor*, while in actual practice saints' tombs are referred to as *mazar* or *ziyarat*, i.e. places to visit in the case of modest-sized ones, or *dargah*, i.e. royal courts, for the more prestigious ones. He mentions the raised stone tombs, and the cupolas (*qubba*) erected over them. Relics of the saints, such as their staffs, their blankets and their robes, are preserved and worshipped. Mosques are built near the tombs to perform canonical prayers (Persian text, pp. 21–3; Urdu text, pp. 59–62).

The revenue of such institutions is also mentioned. The caretakers receive offerings in cash and kind. In addition, some tombs have permanent endowments, *auqaf*, the revenue of which accrues to the shrine and its caretakers (Persian text, p. 19; Urdu text, p. 56).

These caretakers are repeatedly mentioned. They are usually called *khadim* or *mujawir*. They act as intermediaries between saints and worshippers. They appropriate the offerings. The faithful think it necessary to please them in order to gain the favours of the saints. (Persian text, p. 65; Urdu text, p. 137.) Our text does not give any information about the recruitment of these caretakers, but from ethnographical sources we know that they were members of Sufi orders, usually recruited on an hereditary basis. In addition to these caretakers, there were less respectable specialists who also worked at the shrines. These were musicians (*qawwal*) who per-

formed concerts of mystical music, (*majlis*); they were recruited—this is not said in our text—among lower heterodox Sufis or more usually untouchable castes; the musicians who lead the dancing girls belonged also to the untouchable castes.

Our text deals at length with the beliefs underlying such devotions and institutions. The worshippers, the author says, are convinced that the saint hears their prayers, and that, if pleased with the offerings, he can grant the favours requested: food, children, the cure to diseases, redress of torts, discovery of unknown things, etc. In other words, he has the power to perform miracles:

> They believe that if a good man, by his mystical exercises, his piety and his austerity, has reached near Allah and become an intercessor, then, when he is dead, his soul gets great powers. If a faithful represents his image, or makes a pilgrimage to the place where he lived or to his tomb, to make a supplication, then, on the basis of the aforesaid powers, the saint will be informed of his problems and will intercede for him in this world and the other. (Persian text, p. 21; Urdu text, p. 59).

The powers of the saints do not concern only the well-being of individual worshippers. They are also credited with control of the territory where they lived. Our text first illustrates the well-known medieval concept of *wilaya*, according to which saints controlled their own province, and even in some case the whole of India (Digby, pp. 62–3).

> The saint worshippers have also the following wrong belief; they say that one Chishti dervish reached the territory of the Naqshbandis and tried very hard to beat the drum of guidance [i.e. to recruit disciples]; but through the mystical powers (*tasarrufat*) of the Naqshbandi *pir* he could not make a big noise [i.e. he could not succeed in his aim and turned back].
>
> Similarly, the tomb worshippers say that as long as the *wali* of Hindustan, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti [d. 1233, Ajmer] did not give permission (*'ijazat*) to Shah Badi'uddin Madar [d. 1440, Makanpur] to settle [in this country], the sun of the guidance of the latter did not shine in India.
>
> One can find many such—false or true—stories in the biographies of the *pirs* and *darwishes*, but only what has been told by ulama is right, etc. . . . (Persian text, p. 78; Urdu text, pp. 160–1).

In one of its few genuinely ethnographical passages, our text shows how the concept of territorial control is applied to smaller geographical units:

These tomb worshippers have also the following characteristic: they appoint distinct tombs of saints for each town or settlement, as if the *pir* was the governor [. . .] of the settlement or village; they approach him in time of trouble to fulfil their needs. On the basis of this wrong belief they have established some customs: for instance, when they marry their children, they bring the bridegroom to greet the tomb and leave some money as an offering. They show respect to the caretakers [of the tombs] as [if they were officers] in royal palaces; in time of difficulty they appoint them as agent and follow their advice; they consider them as intercessors who in time of need can present in the palace of the king the petitions of those who have commissioned them.

On the day of the 'urs they have turbans tied on their heads by the caretakers of [the tomb of] the *pir*; and they proudly come back with these turbans which they consider as a royal favour. As Allah said: [in Arabic]

'Each group of people takes pride in its own goods'
(Persian text, pp. 77–8; Urdu text, pp. 159–60).

Worship of living saints. Our text deals also with the cult of living saints, although this second topic occupies much less space in the volume. Four themes are treated.

The first three are about the relationship of the disciple (*murid*) to his spiritual guide (*murshid, pir*) in the medieval Sufi tradition. First, undue respect is shown to the person of the guide: disciples prostrate themselves in front of him, a mark of respect due to Allah (Persian text, pp. 108; Urdu text, p. 218). Second, disciples follow blindly the advices of their guide, even if they are unreasonable, following the verse of Sa'adi:

> If he [the king] says that day is night, you must say:
> 'Look! Here are the moon and the stars'.

They even follow his advice if it is contrary to the *shari'a*:

In our times ignorant and stupid people say that one must obey one's guide even if what he orders is contrary to the Law of Islam. And they use as proof these verses of Hāfiz: 'If the *pir* orders you to colour the prayer carpet with wine, [you must obey] because the Traveller is not ignorant of the stages on the Way' (Persian text, p. 13; Urdu text, p. 47).

The third is the use of the image of the guide as an intermediary to get access to Allah; this is called in our text *fana' fi'l-shaikh*; this is an allusion to the well-known technique, specially among the Naqshbandis, usually called *muraqaba*, which was widely discussed

in Delhi circles in this time (see Troll, pp. 32–51; Persian text, pp. 76–7; Urdu text, pp. 157–8).

The fourth theme extends beyond the framework of institutional Sufism; it is the general belief that living saints may have all the miraculous powers attributed to dead saints: granting children, food, control of a territory, knowledge of the invisible, etc.

This inventory of the topics discussed under this first heading allows us to define more precisely the purpose of the book. It treats of all forms of worship of Muslim saints of any kind, whether living or dead. One should notice that the author does not make any distinction between living and dead saints, contrary to the opinion of some medieval scholars like Ibn Taymiyya. This purpose is best summarized by the phrase *pir parasti*, worship of pirs, used in the preamble; for the word pir in Persian is used indifferently to translate several Arabic words like *wali*, *shaikh*, *murshid*, and can mean any saintly person whether living or dead. The aim of the book is to criticize all forms of veneration addressed to these saintly persons within the framework of Indian medieval Sufism.

The scope of pir parasti can be defined more precisely in a negative fashion. In similar contemporary literature, it is usual to condemn both the cult of Muslim saints and of pagan deities, the classical example of the latter being Shitala Devi, the goddess of diseases, particularly smallpox. Here such obviously pagan cults are not included. The book treats exclusively of Muslim saints.

2.3 Comparison with precedents mentioned in the classical literature

In order to qualify the practices listed under the first heading, an intermediary step (second heading) is necessary. For these practices are purely Indian; at least our author says so. He ignores the pan-Islamic roots of medieval Indian piety. He blankly says that saint worship did not exist in India in the golden age of Sufism under Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325, Delhi); (Persian text, p. 93; Urdu text, p. 190). This is contrary to all historical evidence (Digby, 1986). These practices being considered as purely Indian, they cannot be mentioned in the classical literature; one has then to find some precedents which resemble them in the classical literature.

They fall into three categories. First, the idol worship of the heathens (Persian text, pp. 11ff, 32, 62ff; Urdu text, pp. 42–8, 78, 132–4). After explaining the origins of idol worship, the author

presents several lists of heathen communities where the following are mentioned: the Fire-worshippers, the Manichaeans, the Sabeans, the Jahili Arabs, and finally the Hindus. The last, in one of the theoretical passages, are defined as 'those who believe that the invisible spiritual principle who governs the universe can take various forms; and that to please them, their idols must be worshipped' (Persian text, p. 32; Urdu text, p. 78). And, of course, many Hindu rituals are described throughout the book, as we shall see presently.

The second category is that of the People of the Book: Jews and Christians who worship their prophets and saints, and use their priests and monks as intermediaries between God and the faithful (Persian text, pp. 13–14; Urdu text, pp. 46–8).

The third category is that of deviant Muslims. They were either the early ones who worshipped tombs and had to be corrected by the Prophet and his Companions (such instances are mentioned throughout the book with many quotations from the Quran and the Traditions), or they were later Muslims who indulged in innovations (*bid'a*) like worshipping the tombs of saints, here false tombs of prophets, foot or hand prints of Muhammad and Ali (Persian text, p. 63, Urdu text, pp. 134–5).

2.4 Authorities quoted

The choice of authorities cited betrays the doctrinal leanings of our text and explains its condemnation of the cult of Muslim saints as practised in India. Three kinds of authorities are presented in the preamble: the Quran, Traditions, and the sayings of the saints. The question arises as to whether or not this short list adequately covers the whole range of authorities actually cited in the book.

Quran and Traditions. These two authorities are the more frequently quoted sources used to support each step of the argument. Quranic citations (the references to which are given in the Persian lithograph) are often accompanied by commentaries based on some classical *tafsir*. It would require too much space to go into an analysis of whether or not these choices of quotations and commentaries reflect any particular doctrinal tendency.

Quotations of *hadith* are drawn from the six classical collections as well as from the famous anthology called *Mishkat al-Masabih*, an edition prepared by Waliuddin (d. 1342) of the *Masabih al-Sunna* of al-Baghawi (d. 1122) (EI², I, p. 893). He also quotes the com-

mentary of 'Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi (d. 1642) on the *Mishkat* (see EI², I, pp. 60–1). Here also, a study of the choice of Traditions would be useful. The author himself gives an indication of the authorities he used to select and criticize Traditions. One part of the work is devoted to the rejection of false Traditions which 'were forged by the caretakers of the tombs in order to earn money'. He invokes the authority of Ibn Taymiyya, Ahmad Rumi and 'other trustworthy books which have demonstrated in detail the spuriousness of such false Traditions' (Persian text, p. 99; Urdu text, p. 200). Most, if not all, of them, as we shall see later, belong to the Hanbali school. The author of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* shows a particular reliance on the Hanbali school for hadith criticism.

Some conclusions emerge from this review of the first two kinds of authorities. Not only does the author rely heavily on Quran and Traditions to bring back religious practice to the pristine purity of the 'Way of Muhammad' and his Companions, but he also relies extensively on a particular school of hadith criticism, that of the Hanbalis. He clearly joins hands with this subterranean current, which throughout the history of Islam opposed the cult of Muslim saints, and which emerged again in the front line during the nineteenth century (Goldziher, II, pp. 332–5).

Sayings of the great saints. The third kind of authorities announced in the preamble is the sayings (*akhbar*) of the saints. The use of these sayings presents curious problems because of the way they were selected and used in the argument: the author undertakes the seemingly impossible task of having the cult of saints refuted by the saints themselves.

The selection is made of a wide range of authors who belonged to many Sufi orders. Some of them lived outside India, or even before the advent of Islam in India, like Hasan al-Basri. References are given to the early Naqshbandis and Yassawis, and to the Qadiris; the latter are quoted through the *Futuh al-Ghayb* of Abdul Qadir al-Jilani. What is most interesting is the ample use made of Indian saints. He quotes anecdotes from members of the Suhrawardi order; in several places he shows a clear preference for the sober Naqshbandi order (Persian text, pp. 15–16; Urdu text, p. 50) which keeps strictly to the 'Way of Muhammad'. But the core of his argument is based on anecdotes relating to the early members of the Chishti orders: Mu'inuddin (d. 1233, Ajmer), Qutbuddin (d. 1236, Delhi), Fariduddin (d. 1265), Nizamuddin (d. 1325,

Delhi), Nasiruddin (d. 1356, Delhi). These anecdotes are quoted from two kinds of sources. One is the early contemporary *malfuzat*, like the *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad* of Amir Hasan 'Ali Sijzi (Persian text, p. 96; Urdu text, p. 195); and the *Khayr al-Majalis* of Hamid Qalandar (Persian text, pp. 94–5; Urdu text, p. 192). However, most of the time the author relies on much later hagiography. He seems to have had in hand only one book, of the seventeenth century, the *Akhbar al-Akhyar* of 'Abdulhaqq Dihlawi (d. 1642, Delhi) (EI², I, pp. 60–1; Persian text, pp. 66 and 94; Urdu text, p. 193). This last mentioned text is chronologically the latest authority avowedly used in the whole book.

The use of these Sufi sources is paradoxical. They are quoted to refute beliefs in the miraculous powers of the saints and rituals performed at their tombs. But precisely these sources, particularly the Chishti ones, which are most abundantly quoted, contain a justification of such beliefs and rituals (Digby). It is only by a careful but rather dishonest selection of isolated passages that such texts can be used to condemn the cult of saints. The author, who had clear Naqshbandi leanings, selected on purpose quotations from the order which is the most lenient towards all forms of saint worship. His argument seems to be that if the genuine Chishtis, who are the most lax, condemn the cult of saints, all other orders would do so a fortiori.

Law books and polemical literature. There is an additional type of authority, the rulings of the Schools of Law, which are dealt with in a strange way. The author does not state in the preamble that he is using such authorities, but in fact he does. This plays a great part in shaping the argument of the whole book since the *ijma'* of the scholars is acknowledged as an authority.

First, our text makes clear in a general way that one must adhere to one school of Law (*madhhab*). This statement is made in connection with the more general topic of deciding whether the Sufis are bound to the rules of the shari'a or not. If not, they could indulge in acts contrary to the *shar'* like taking intoxicants, listening to music, allowing women into the shrines and neglecting obligatory rituals in order to reach their goal on the mystical path or, more prosaically, obtain favours from saints. This debate is directed not only against popular practices at the tombs, but also against the more organized *be-shar'*, unorthodox Sufi orders. The latter are not mentioned directly—Shah Madar, the founder of the

heterodox Madari order, is quoted in other contexts (Persian text, pp. 59 and 78; Urdu text, pp. 128 and 161; on Shah Badiuddin Madar, see EI², I, pp. 858–9; Gaborieau, 1977, pp. 122–7; Gaborieau, 1986a, pp. 111 and 122–3). However, there is a clear allusion to members of such heterodox orders and to low-status musicians who haunt the tombs. The author definitely stands against them with the more respectable *ba-shar'*, orthodox, great orders who insisted on respecting carefully the injunctions of the Shari'a (on these two poles of Indian Sufism, see Gaborieau 1986a, pp. 120–3). He emphasizes that all Sufis of repute were affiliated to a School of Law:

> In the eyes of the legists (*fuqaha*) to make permissible what is prohibited is a kind of infidelity. [...] The tomb worshippers say that tomb-worship is a way that leads to God. They add: 'Do not listen to the mullahs who go repeating bad things to the people. You should better adhere to the advice of the *pirs* and *murshids*; and never get involved in the quarrels of the Hanafis and Shafi'is. For our saints have said that the Sufis are not bound by any school of Law'. In fact most of the Sufis did adhere to a School of Law: for instance Muhiuddin 'Abdul Qadir al-Jilani belonged to the Hanbali school and also gave *fatawa* according to the Shafi'i school. Mu'inuddin Chishti was a Shafi'i; Shihabuddin Suhrawardi [d. 1168] was also a Shafi'i; Khwaja 'Abdul Khaliq Ghujdhwani [d. 1220], Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi [d. 1166] and Khwaja Baha'uddin Naqshband [d. 1389], who were the greatest Shaikhs of the Naqshbandi and Yasawi orders, were all Hanafi. On the day of resurrection, in which group will these bad [heterodox Sufis] be counted? They call themselves Qadiri, Chishti, Suhrawardi or Naqshbandi; but these are names coined in the fashion of the Imamis [Shi'ites] who call themselves 'Alawi, Ja'fari, etc.... [...] These are only names without reality; and false pretensions without any influence on the work and beliefs of the real saints [...] Fortunately there remain in our times a few genuine Sufis who keep to the way of the Prophet and his Companions. They follow the *sunna* and save the honour of the saints [of their orders]. (Persian text, pp. 55–7; Urdu text, pp. 122–5.)

Does the author of our text give preference to any particular School of Law? The answer may be found by using both a negative and a positive approach. Negatively, he does not condemn the rulings of any of the established schools, as do the Ahl-i Hadith, who proclaim that there are no authorities other than the Quran and the Traditions. In this they follow some hints of Sayyid Ahmad

Barelwi who, however, did not make a system of it. This fact may help us in tracing the origin of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. Since it does not reflect the tenets of the Ahl-i Hadith regarding the Law Schools, it was not forged by this sect. It must have been composed earlier, in the circles of disciples of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi, bfore the tenets of the sect crystallized.

Positively, our text betrays an eclectic stand towards the Schools of Law. Nowhere does the author affirm that he is the exclusive follower of a particular school; all four schools are considered legitimate. Does it mean that he has no preference. Curiously enough, in the course of the argument only one School of Law is used. This is not the Hanafi school which is supreme in north India, where the text was composed, nor the Shafi'i one which is prevalent in south India. It is the Hanbali school, which theoretically has no adherents in India. The text insists that Ahmad ibn Hanbal is recognized as an *imam* who founded a School of Law. To compose *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*, our author drew mainly on three texts, two of which are undoubtedly Hanbali.

One, called Sirat al-mustaqim, is of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), Damascus) (EI², III, pp. 951–5): the full title is: *Kitab al-Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim* (see Memon; Laoust, 1939; Hames; Shams-i Tabriz Khan, Persian text, pp. 38, 51–3 and 99; Urdu text, pp. 89, 130–5 and 200).

The second is by an immediate disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya (1292–1350, Damascus) (EI², III, pp. 821–2). It is called (for short), in our text, *Ighatha*. According to a footnote of the editor (Persian text, p. 26, n. 3) the full title is *Ighathat al-lah fan fi masa'id al-Shaytan* (for further information on this text, see Memon). This is quoted in three places in the first half of the book (Persian text, pp. 26, 27 and 30; Urdu text, pp. 68, 70 and 75).

In connection with the two preceding books, our text gives much longer quotations from a third one which it calls *Majalis al-Abrar* (Persian text, pp. 14–19 and 27–31; Urdu text, pp. 48–56 and 69–75). According to the editor of the Persian text (p. 14, n.1) the full title is *Majalis al-Abrar wa Masalik al-Akhyar wa Makha'if al-Bida' wa Maqami' al-Ashrar*. It contains one hundred chapters, each devoted to a hadith quoted from the *Masabih al-Sunna* of al-Baghawi. Its author was a certain Ahmad Rumi who died in AH 981 (1573–4). However according to Brockelmann (G.A.L., II, p. 661) he died in AH 1041 or 1043; the editor adds that this book

was commended by Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz. I have no further information on it, nor have real proof that it is a Hanbali work. However, since it is always quoted in connetion with the two preceding ones, and since these quotations show that it holds the same doctrine, I assume it to be of Hanbali inspiration. If not, it is probably to be classified among the works of the traditionalists who kept alive the early Islamic prohibitions against the veneration of graves (Goldziher, II, p. 333).

This heavy reliance on Hanbali texts, both for the criticism of hadith and for the doctrine concerning the cult of saints, provides us another clue for the origin of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. We have seen above that the Delhi school, through the time of 'Abdul 'Aziz, rejected the doctrines of Ibn Taymiyya concerning the saints. We thus fall back again to the circle of Ahmad Barelwi and his disciples, whose doctrine emerged in 1818. *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* must have been composed between this date and the 1860s, the year when the Ahl-i Hadith evolved into a distinct *ghair muqallid* sect.

2.5 Condemnation of the cult of saints

We have now in hand all the data necessary to analyse the arguments used by our text to condemn the cult of saints practised in India. The author shows that it can be assimilated to precedents described in Islamic literature (second heading) and incurs the same condemnation as these precedents according to the authorities quoted (third heading); the conclusions drawn are now to be presented (fourth heading). To make them clearer we will contrast them to the approved way of dealing with the saintly beings (fifth heading). The condemnation of the cult is based on three types of arguments: theological ones, legal ones about ritual rules, and finally a more general argument which enjoins Muslims to avoid resembling non-Muslims.

Theological arguments. These concern the attributes (*sifat*) the saints are credited with by their worshippers, e.g. control of natural and supernatural forces and the giving of Law. The first one is the foundation of the belief that saints can perform miracles (*karamat*) and have powers of intercession (*shifa'at*). The second one is the basis of the authority of the living saints as spiritual guides on their disciples: they have the power to decide what is wrong and right.

The argument goes that such attributes belong only to Allah;

saints have no power to perform miracles and no authority to make Law. To credit created beings with these attributes is associating partners with God, *shirk*.

This argument is classical in Wahhabi literature (Sh. EI, p. 543; Hughes, pp. 579–80) and has remained common in popular textbooks of religious education (Kifayatullah, IV, pp. 19-22 of the Urdu text). It is interesting to emphasize its implications in this context. Our text draws three conclusions: first, if these attributes belong exclusively to Allah, it follows that all human beings are equal in matters of spiritual powers: 'All Muslims, common people and elite alike (*'amm o khass*), are equal; they differ only in social ranks and in [good or bad] actions. From the point of view of belief, there is no difference between them.' (Persian text, p. 39; Urdu text, p. 91.) This statement destroys the very foundation of medieval Sufism, which put saints above the common people.

Second, the saints, being devoid of any particular privilege, have no powers of intercession, so it is useless to pray to them to obtain favours. They can help the other people by way of *wasila*, mediation. This does not mean that they act in any way to fulfil the request of the faithful, or even that they forward their prayers to God; it means only that by their good works they set an example to the ordinary people who can imitate them, and in this way they please Allah.

Third is the harsh condemnation of those who believe in the special powers of the saints. We have seen above that Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz refused to condemn as kafir those who worshipped saints (Rizvi, 1982, p. 191). Our text is much more radical: saint-worshippers are branded as mushrik and kafir; saint-worship is qualified as *fitna*, which is a very strong word and which I translate by 'schism' in order to convey this sense of strong condemnation.

Legal qualifications of the ritual performed for the saints. Here, in addition to quotations of the Quran and the Traditions, our text relies heavily on the Hanbali texts mentioned above, particularly those of Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauziya and even more Ahmad Rumi; Ibn Taymiyya is quoted only once (Persian text, p. 38; Urdu text, p. 89). These qualifications concern the tombs of the saints, the role of their caretakers, and the rituals performed there.

First, it is absolutely prohibited (*haram*) to raise the tombs above the earth's level, and to turn them into permanent structures of stone or bricks; to erect cupolas and other buildings over them; all

such constructions should be razed to the ground. Tombs should not be turned into shrines. Neither periodic offerings nor permanent endowments should be given to them. All the Indian institutions linked with Sufism as well as village shrines are dismissed. Our text joins hands with Wahhabi radicalism, in contradistinction to Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, who accepted such buildings.

Second, all the religious staff linked with such institutions are simply dismissed: it is prohibited to stand as intermediary between the faithful and Allah. The caretakers of the tombs who pretend to do so, as well as the murshids who pretend to guide their disciples, act unlawfully as they raise themselves to the status of partners of God. They earn unlawfully a living by appropriating the offerings of ignorant devotees or disciples. A good Muslim should not have anything to do with caretakers of shrines, and should consider his murshid only as an example to imitate, not as an intermediary on the way to God.

Third, most of the rituals performed at the tombs are objectionable in respect to place, time and form. It is reprehensible to consider a particular place holy because a saint lived there or was buried there; hence the ban on turning tombs into shrines. Going there for the purpose of a pilgrimage (ziyarat) is prohibited. In respect to time, it is reprehensible to fix particular days of the week or of the year to pray for a particular saint. Hence the individual worship of saints on Friday night, which is customary in India, is condemned, as also the collective worship at the 'urs on the death anniversary.

Concerning the form of the rituals, the prohibitions are numerous. Two of them should be stressed here as the most important: supplications (*du'a*) should not be addressed directly to the saint, but only to Allah. Secondly, care should be taken that the devotions performed do not take the form of a vow (*nadhr*), that is to say a kind of bargain where the faithful promises to make such and such offerings if he gets such and such favour. It is also prohibited to bring back home reliefs of the offerings as benedictions (*tabarruk*).

There is in addition a long list of prohibitions of various kinds. One should not show to the tombs any mark of respect due only to the holy Ka'ba, by prostrating (*sajda*), circumambulating (*tawaf*), kissing, etc. Canonical prayers should not be recited near tombs, and mosques should not be built there for this purpose. Lamps should not be lit, incense should not be burnt; covers and veils should not be spread over the tombs.

Finally, one should avoid everything which might remind people of a profane festival. Women should not be allowed admission. All kinds of music, vocal or instrumental, are banned, including mystical concerts, the classical *sama'*, here called *majlis*. A fortiori, all forms of amusement are prohibited: the coming in procession (with the accompaniment of musicians) of dancing girls, the wearing of standards, the playing of games, dancing, drinking intoxicants. In short, all the picturesque features of festivals in honour of saints which can be witnessed to this day in famous shrines are rejected.

This is contrasted by our text with the approved way of praying in the name of saints. No particular places or times are appointed, but if one happens to pass near a tomb one may stop there to pray. This is good, since tombs remind us of death and of the world thereafter. The invocation (du'a) should be addressed to Allah alone; in it one should ask God to transfer the merit (*thawab*) of the prayer and of the accompanying offerings to the soul of the deceased; no favour should be requested. Offerings should be distributed to the needy.

All the objectionable practices listed above are condemned as *shirk fi'l-'ibadat*, since they make created people, the saints, the object of a worship which is due to Allah alone. Appropriate verses of the Quran and Traditions are quoted to back the condemnation. They are also branded as innovations (*bid'a*) which did not exist in the time of the Prophet and the first two generations of his followers. One should notice that the word *ittibā'*, used in the title of the book, is technically the opposite of *bid'a*. This argument is not original: it is found in the Hanbali literature from which it is borrowed (Sh. EI, p. 62). It has remained common in popular reformist textbooks (Kifayatullah, IV, pp. 22–4 of the Urdu text; Thanawi, IV and VI).

Resemblance with non-Muslims. Our author puts forward one more argument which is less common: it is in my view the most interesting and forms the core of the book. The worship of saints is all the more to be prohibited because it makes Muslims resemble the Hindu polytheists among whom they live. I shall discuss this argument, which is based on the concept of resemblance (*mushabaha*) and imitation (*tashabbuh*), and try to trace its origin.

First, our text has to describe the cult of saints in such a way that it appears as similar to Hindu idol-worship. This is done through endless parallels in which saint-worship (*pir parasti*) and idol

worship (*but parasti*) are compared feature by feature. Such a comparison is announced in the preamble quoted above and mentioned again and again throughout the book. However, it is developed systematically in a long passage in the second half, which may well provide a clue to an interpretation of the whole work.

It is worth quoting this passage *in extenso*; it conveys the spirit of the book better than any commentary:

> Particularly in this country [India] which is far away from the centre of the Islamic world, one must know that whatever the Hindu polytheists do for their idols, the tomb worshippers and saint worshippers also do exactly in the same way in the name of tombs and saints.
>
> 1. The idol-worshippers dress the idols with silk and brocade. Similarly, the saint worshippers spread silken covers on the tombs of their saints.
>
> 2. Just as the idol-worshippers make supplications and humiliate themselves in front of their idols; and, in order to have their needs fulfilled, feel obliged to bring presents and offerings for the idols and their caretakers; in the same way the saint-worshippers, in order to fulfil their vows, bring all kinds of offerings to the tombs for the caretakers.
>
> 3. The idol-worshippers have also the following custom: they fix a day according to the solar calendar for pilgrimage to their idols; they assemble on that day and bring offerings of flowers, sweets and all sorts of presents in money and kind, which they give to the idols; and, putting their head on the threshold [of the shrine], they make prostration. In the same way the saint-worshippers fix a date according to the lunar calendar for the pilgrimage to the tomb; they assemble in crowds and do there exactly all the things the idol-worshippers do for their idols. Moreover, they hire dancing girls and their musicians to perform dance and music—an act which is a great sin: on the Day of Resurrection all these shameful acts will be inscribed in the record of the deeds of these ignorants.
>
> 4. The idol-worshippers have also the following custom: on fixed days, they decorate and adorn with jewellery their idols and take them out in procession. The saint-worshippers and tomb-worshippers similarly build and decorate mock tombs which they call *ta'ziya* in the days of Ashura in the moth of Muharram and take them out in procession.
>
> 5. The idol-worshippers have also the following custom: they erect flags in the name of their idols; they raise them with great respect as if they were gods and carry them [in processions]. In the same way the saint-worshippers erect coloured flags on fixed days in the name

of Shah Madar, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, Salar Mas'ud Ghazi [see Gaborieau, 1975] and Sarwar Sultan [a thirteenth century saint, see Herklots, p. 143]; they raise them and carry them in procession up to their tombs where they plant them; they consider them as intercessors to fulfil their needs and to solve their difficulties.

Some righteous ulama from a foreign country happened to come to India; they saw the behaviour [of the tomb-worshippers] and listened to their discourses; they said [quotation in Arabic; authorship untraced]: "These people, by worshipping *shaikhs* and tombs, follow the Hindus in their worship of the idols."

6. The fire-worshippers and idol-worshippers have also the following custom: on fixed days they celebrate the festival ['*id*) of their idols and gather in big crowds. Similarly, the saint-worshippers celebrate *'id-i ghadir* [a Shi'i festival; see Herklots, pp. 216–17] and the 'urs of the saints; in the same fashion as the polytheists, they give themselves to merriment, amusement and plays. In fact, in doing so, they please the souls of the devils and of the impure spirits; and they disease the souls of the saints.

[Here are inserted long quotations from Ibn Taymiyya; the text then continues:]

7. The idol-worshippers have also the custom of celebrating with joy the birth of god Krishna. Likewise, the saint-worshippers celebrate every year on the 12th of Rajab the birthday of 'Ali; like the fire worshippers, they celebrate the [Iranian spring festival of] *nauroz* in spite of the fact that 'Ali has said: "For us every day is *nauroz*."

8. It is also the custom of idol-worshippers to greet people by the name of a creature [like: '*ya Rama*'] instead of saying "*salam 'alay-kum*." Similarly, the saint-worshippers, instead of saying "*salam 'alay-kum*," say "*ya 'Ali madad*."

9. The polytheists have also the custom of playing musical instruments in the funeral processions; the saint-worshippers do the same for their own dead.

10. The polytheists have also the custom of playing bells, kettle-drums, drums, etc . . . in their temples; they consider this music as an act of worship which brings them near to God. Similarly, the saint-worshippers play drums and other musical instruments in front of the tombs; moreover after performing ablutions, they listen to the unlawful songs [performed by the *qawwals* and other singers] in the mystical concerts [majlis].

11. The polytheists have also the custom of considering as their guides depraved people who go naked; if one of them offers them a cup of intoxicant, they drink it without hesitation and without discussion, since they think it is a benediction [tabarruk]. Similarly, the saint

worshippers accept hashish and other intoxicants from the hands of the caretakers of the tombs.

12. The polytheists have also the custom of reciting the names of their saints and their genealogies as [a substitute for] canonical prayer and *darud*. The saint-worshippers, similarly, leave aside the names of Allah and give such attention to the names of their former saints as they should give to the names of Allah; they do not even consider the canonical prayers to be as necessary as their litanies.

13. The polytheists have also the custom of giving water in the name of their dead holy men and to build sheds in which drinking water is provided in the names of other than Allah in order to get merit. The saint-worshippers follow the same custom under the name of "vow of Husain"; they do not know that it is forbidden to make vows to anyone other than Allah; in fact it is permissible only to give food and water to the poor and needy for the pleasure and satisfaction of Allah, with the intention that the merit (*thawab*) [of this charitable act] may reach Imam Husain or any other saint.

14. The polytheists have also the custom to set free animals in the name of their idols. Likewise, the tomb-worshippers set free animals in the name of the tombs as an offering.

15. The polytheists have also the following custom: out of respect, they build temples. Similarly, the saint-worshippers build *imambaras* which they call also *ta'ziya-khana* [as shrines for Imam Husain for the Muharram celebrations; see Herklots, pp. 146 and 159–60].

16. The polytheists have the same custom: they deposit sweets in front of their idols and later eat them with great respect. Similarly, the saint-worshippers bring sweets as offerings to the tombs and the *ta'ziyas*; they call them *mufrit* and eat them with great respect; if the meat of a canonical sacrifice [which is without any doubt a benediction] were available, they would not show so much respect.

17. It is also the custom of the Hindus, when they come back from the temple after worshipping their idols, to have coloured marks printed on their foreheads, and flower garlands tied around their necks. Similarly, the tomb-worshippers sprinkle perfumes on tomb covers and perfume their eyes, kiss and touch the covers, and have rags torn from these covers tied around their heads by the caretakers of the tombs; they come back home delighted as if they would come back from a royal palace with a robe of honour (*khil'at*).

18. The polytheists have also the custom of establishing friendship with the caretakers of the temples; and of considering them as their mediators (*wakil*) and intercessors (*shafi'*) to get access to God. Similarly, the tomb-worshippers consider the caretakers of the tombs as their mediators, and they are very afraid of displeasing them. (Persian text, pp. 57–9 and 63–5; Urdu text, pp. 125–9, and 135–8).

After having shown the resemblance of saint-worshippers with Hindu polytheists, the argument is pursued in the following way: Allah has forbidden Muslims to resemble polytheists; therefore the worship of saints is prohibited.

This is not original. Our author borrows it from Ibn Taymiyya, whom he quotes at length between no. 6 and no. 7 of the parallels translated above. A translation of the main passages of these quotations will be enough to substantiate my point:

> Allama Abul 'Abbas Ahmad [Ibn Taymiyya], the *mufti* of Syria, who was awarded in his own time the title of "Proof of Islam" (*hujjat al-islam*), reported in his book entitled *Sirat al-Mustaqim* the following Tradition of the Prophet [in Arabic]:
>
> 'The one who imitates a people becomes one of them'.
>
> After that the same scholar writes [quotation in Arabic]: 'As a consequence of this verse, it is absolutely prohibited to resemble them [the polytheists]; similarly the Prophet said: 'Do the opposite of what the polytheists do' (Persian text, pp. 50–1; Urdu text, p. 130).
>
> This sums up the first part of the book of Ibn Taymiyya, which deals with the question of resemblance with non-Muslims.
>
> Then comes a summary of the second part of the same book which deals with the relationship of Islam with pre-Islamic rituals:
>
> The same scholar, in his chapter on unbelievers, writes about the interdiction of resembling the polytheists in many other customs and ways and quotes many Traditions of the Prophet and his Companions; he utters a strong condemnation and reports the following Tradition of the Prophet [in Arabic]:
>
> > 'Whenever a people introduces an innovation (*bid'a*), Allah takes away from them an analogous good custom (sunna).'
>
> Thus the innovations introduced by the Shi'a in the time of *'ashura* may be recounted among the resemblances with the infidels. In the same book Ibn Taymiyya says that circumambulation around the stone and the dome of Jabal Rahmat is another *shari'at*, i.e. it is not the Muhammadan *shari'at*. To assemble in such a way for singing and playing musical instruments is by all means a very bad custom. [. . .] Further in the same chapter Ibn Taymiyya says that there are two kinds of festivals (*'id*); the first, *makani*, is defined according to place: people assemble on a fixed place to hold a fair; the second, *zamani*, is fixed according to time:

people assemble on a fixed day. The first one, fixed according to place, is much worse than the second one because it resembles idol-worship, and is a way leading to idol-worship. Now, among the various sorts of idol-worship, one is the festival fixed according to place, for the idol-worshippers go on purpose to the places where the idols are kept and believe this act brings them near to God. [After comparing tomb-worshippers with the Arabs of the Jahiliyya who worshipped goddesses, our text continues:] the same author [Ibn Taymiyya] again says that worse [than holding festivals at tombs] is the fact that people make vows to offer oil to illuminate the tombs. [Quotation in Arabic:]

It is not permissible to make such a vow; he who has made such a vow must make an act of expiation according to most of the scholars including Ahmad [Ibn Hanbal]; similarly [an expiation is due] if one has dedicated some money or any other goods to the keepers (*sadama*), caretakers (*mujawirin*) or residents (*'akifin*) of this shrine (*buq'a*). The keepers of these shrines resemble those of the shrines of al-Lat, al-Uzza and al-Manat, who eat unlawfully the property of the people and divert them from the way to God. These residents resemble those to whom the Prophet Ibrahim said:

> 'What are these idols you worship [end of Arabic quotation]'. (Persian text, pp. 51–3; Urdu text, pp. 130–5)

From this long argument on resemblance we may draw two conclusions. First, it demonstrates the heavy reliance of our text on Ibn Taymiyya and his school. These borrowings from Hanbali authors explain not only this particular argument on resemblance, but also the whole lay-out of the book. It applies the doctrine and method of Ibn Taymiyya, who also compared objectionable religious practices of deviant Muslims with those of the People of the Book and of the Heathens, and condemned them with the support of Quranic verses, Traditions and the sayings of early Sufi saints. Our text is, finally, an adaptation of the book of Ibn Taymiyya to the Indian context; its author only added examples drawn from the Indian scene in Delhi and its surroundings and made them the particular object of his condemnation.

This first conclusion has a bearing on the interpretation of the whole book, and this is our second conclusion. Aziz Ahmad, relying mainly on the short and ambiguous preamble of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*—which states that saint-worship "spread [in India] because of the social contacts [of the Muslim] with the Hindu polytheists" (*az sabab-i mukhalitat o muwanisat-i mushrikan-i hunud*)—seems to believe that the main theme of the book is a

borrowing from the Hindus (Ahmad, p. 209). The analysis above shows amply that the real theme is not a borrowing but a resemblance. After the preamble the author never says that devotions to saints are borrowed; in other words, his standpoint is not historical or ethnographic but legal. The cult of saints is to be condemned not because it is borrowed but because, whatever its origin, it makes Muslims resemble Hindus and other non-Muslim communities.

2.6 Al-Balagh al-Mubin, *a Wahhabi text*

Let us now sum up the conclusions drawn from the examination of the content of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin*. It cannot be the work of Shah Waliullah nor of his son Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz, who were both moderate. It reflects the more radical teachings which emerged after 1818. However, although it since has been published exclusively by the Ahl-i Hadith, it does not reflect the particular tenets of this sect. It must then have been composed before the 1860s, when the doctrine of that sect was fixed. The text retains a minimal Sufi dimension with a clear preference for the sober Naqshbandi way; in that sense it is in line with other autochthonous reformist texts. It is, however, based mainly on Hanbali sources which were not widely accepted in India before the beginning of the nineteenth century. This dependence clearly points to the militant movements—loosely called *Wahhabi*—which gained currency in India after 1818. Our text may thus be called a mid-nineteenth-century Indian Wahhabi work.

3. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

3.1 *Who is the author of* Al-Balagh al-Mubin?

Much more work would be needed to trace more precisely the author of the book. I have identified all the topics it deals with in the reformist literature of the first half of the nineteenth century; for lack of place, detailed evidence cannot be given here. One may refer to such texts as the *Nasihat al-Muslimin* of Khurram 'Ali Bilhauri (d. 1855), written around 1823, which had a very wide circulation and has been constantly reprinted practically to this day; or to the still unpublished *Diya' al-Iman* of Kifayat 'Ali (d. 1858). Not only are the topics the same, but the examples, largely conven-

tional, are often identical. *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* reflects more clearly the personality of Sayyid Ahmad Brelvi; all its topics may find an illustration in one or the other anecdotes within his—still largely legendary—hagiography (Muhiuddin Ahmad; Rizvi, 1982, pp. 471–7). They are also developed in the two books written on his behalf by his disciples: in the second chapter of the *Sirat al-Mustaqim* (cf. Rizvi, 1892, pp. 500–2) and in the first part of the *Radd al-Ishrak* (translated into Urdu as *Taqwiyat al-Iman*), probably written in Mecca and influenced by the *Kitab al-Tauhid* of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (Rizvi, 1982, pp. 509–13).

Is *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* a patchwork of extracts of these two books, which were also written in Persian? Or is it a new composition deriving from these two books or similar works? These questions can be solved only by a time-consuming textual comparison, which is yet to be done.

3.2 Arabian and Indian Wahhabis and the Hanbali school

Another obvious conclusion of this essay is the link between the Indian and the Arabian Wahhabis through their common inspiration from the Hanbali school. Against the evidence of the early nineteenth century, when both the reformists and their opponents used the label Wahhabi (Rizvi, p. 517), it has lately been the fashion to dismiss any link between the Indian and Arabian reform movements as a legend resulting from a British conspiracy (Mohiuddin Ahmad, p. 98–107). Most nationalist historians in India and Pakistan—with the remarkable exception of 'Ubaidullah Sindhi (see Qureshi, p. 207)—participated in this revision of history. It is true that some administrators, like Hunter, have exgagerated the importance of the "Wahhabi conspiracy"; but the refutation of their exaggerations must not hide obvious facts. The Indian radicals of Delhi in the first decades of the nineteenth century certainly had roots in the tradition of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and of Shah Waliullah, a fact which helped them preserve a minimal Sufi dimension—in contrast to the Fara'izis who tried to erase all Sufi ideas. But *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* betrays another influence, which is preponderant both in its content and methodology. It is that of the Hanbali school, as demonstrated above. Further evidence may be added: the book of Ibn Taymiyya which is mainly used under its shortened title *Sirat al-Mustaqim*: this is precisely the title of the first and most famous

book ascribed to Sayyid Ahmad Brelwi.

But did this influence of the Hanbalis come directly through texts or through intermediaries? One cannot help being impressed by the fact that the most often reprinted Indian Wahhabi tract, the *Nasihat al-Muslimin*, bears the same title as a work of Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhab (d. 1792), the founder of the Wahhabi school in Arabia (EI², III, p. 677). The affiliation of Indian Wahhabis to the Hanbali school of thought was most probably through the Arabian Wahhabis: a textual comparison of the works of the two schools would certainly confirm this hypothesis. If it proves true, one has to assume that the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya reached India in the first decades of the nineteenth century from Arabia through pilgrims, that is to say at the same time that they reached Indonesia by the same channel.

The material presented here supports the British colonial view which was shared by western orientalists both in the last century (Sh. EI, p. 621) and in the present one (Laoust, 1965, pp. 331 and 358–9), and goes against the trends of recent South Asian historiography. One must qualify this statement by saying that the Ahl-i Hadith kept throughout their connections with the Arabian Wahhabis and acknowledged their debt to them. However, at the same time, for fear of raising British suspicion, they emphasized their link to Shah Waliullah (Metcalf, pp. 277–8). They requested the British authorities not to call them Wahhabi in official documents in 1886; a request which was granted (Mathur, pp. 80–3).

3.3 Al-Balagh al-Mubin *and the ethnographic context*

It is also important to assess the ethnographic content of the book I was first interested in it because it apparently contained precise descriptions of popular devotions; I thought it could be used as a source for ethnographical research.

On closer enquiry this did not prove true. The historical and ethnographical content is quite meagre. Information is provided only about northern India and practically limited to the immediate vicinity of Delhi. Only the four major Sufi orders of the area are mentioned: Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya. And only the earliest saints of these orders are quoted; other orthodox or heterodox orders are not mentioned. In addition, only four saints are listed: Shah Madar, the founder of an heterodox order, the Madariyya; plus three others who have no clear affiliation:

Salar Mas'ud (i.e. Ghazi Miyan, see Gaborieau 1975), Sarwar Sultan and Shaikh Saddu (Herklots, p. 139).

A perusal of similar, older or later literature shows that this limited list is very conventional. Objections to the cult of Salar Mas'ud are attested since the fourteenth century. The others are mentioned regularly since a famous letter of Aḥmad Sirhindi in the early seventeenth century (Rizvi, 1980, pp. 321–2 and 1982, pp. 188–90), and they are repeated again and again in the reformist literature down to this day. A genuine ethnographical tone appears only in a few passages which have been exhaustively quoted above. They concern details of the rituals performed at the tombs and the roles of the saints as protectors of villages, towns, provinces or the whole of India. Western literature produced roughly at the same time, like the "Memoire" of Garcin de Tassy published in 1831 and the book by Herklots published in 1832, are much more informative.

This poverty of ethnographical content may be explained by the author's sources of inspiration. Like his model, Ibn Taymiyya, he is interested not in ethnographical matters but in legal qualifications of customary rites. Ibn Taymiyya has been called an ethnographer by social anthropologists (Hames) as well as by recent Indian Muslim reformers (Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi in *Shams-i Tabriz Khan*, p. 3). This may be true for the Middle Eastern context where he lived, but his Indian imitator who wrote *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* is no genuine ethnographer. *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* is only the adaptation of Ibn Taymiyya's doctrine to the Indian context through the use of a few highly conventional examples.

This leads me to a more general point about Indian reformist literature. As I have shown recently on the topic of social stratification (Gaborieau, 1986b, p. 254), Indian reformist literature is mainly concerned with legal qualifications; it limits itself to conventional instances and fails to describe adequately the local context. Its utility as an ethnographical source is very limited; British colonial ethnography is much more useful (see Gaborieau, 1986, pp. 11–12).

3.4 Resemblance, borrowing, Muslim identity

As seen above, our text is careful not to build any direct connection between the cult of Muslim saints and Hindu idol-worship. Later Muslim authors were not so careful: many modern reformers say more clearly that such cults were borrowed from the Hindus (see e.g. Nur Muhammad, pp. 29–33). In this they share one of the pre-

judices of British colonial ethnography—which, in fact, many of them use now. The error of both, the reformers and Western ethnographers, is to consider only two forms: a rather fundamentalist conception of Islam on the one hand, and Hindu customs on the other. They ignore an important middle form, namely medieval Sufi piety, which is responsible for most of the devotions to saints and which was imported to India from abroad (Gaborieau, 1986a, pp. 16–18).

If we leave aside these varying historical perspectives, it remains that one of the teachings of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* has subsisted: this is the general injunction to avoid any resemblance with Hindus. One of the results of nineteenth-century reform movements has been to increase, religiously as well as socially, the gap between Hindus and Muslims; to exacerbate the sense of Muslim identity and, by reaction, of Hindu identity. This trend, which was originally mainly religious, was exploited politically through communal riots and the Pakistan movement (Gaborieau, 1985).

There remains, finally, a curious fact worth mentioning. Contemporary South Asian reformers pretend to ignore being linked with Ibn Taymiyya through the Wahhabis of the last century. But lately there has been renewed interest in Ibn Taymiyya, particularly under the influence of Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, the present head of the Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow. This is written about in his preface to the book of Shams-i Tabriz Khan; the influence of the south Indian scholar Muhammad Yusuf Kokan 'Umari of Madras, who published in 1959 an extensive study in Urdu on Imam Ibn Taymiyya (these and further relevant works are quoted in Shams-i Tabriz Khan, pp. 2–4), is evident here.

The free adaptation of Ibn Taymiyya's *Kitab Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* by Shams-i Tabriz Khan is not devised to fight Hindu influence, as *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* was, but rather Christian and, more generally, Western influence, now perceived as the main threat. The renewed interest in subcontinental scholarly circles in Ibn Taymiyya's life and works is clearly linked with similar trends in most parts of the Islamic world (Hames).

NOTE

The present version of this essay substantially modifies, particularly in its historical dimension, the first, very inadequate draft which was submitted to the International Conference on XVIIth century reform and renewal movements in Islam, Jerusalem, June 1985, the proceedings of which are being currently published in the USA by the Syracuse University Press.

I first thank the organizers of the Conference, Nehemia Levtzion and John Voll, for encouraging me to do further work on the subject. I am also indebted to the participants for their comments (particularly those of Yohanan Friedmann), and the comparative material they presented (in particular the papers of William Roff, Rudolph Peters and Peter von Sivers). These helped me to see the subject in a wider perspective.

I am equally indebted to several scholars of Indian Islam who were not present at that conference. Charles J. Adams delivered in Paris lectures on 'Islamic Resurgence Movements in the Indian Subcontinent: XVIII-XXTH centuries', and made available to me the lithograph of the Persian text; Peter Hardy and Simon Digby raised stimulating questions after reading the first draft; J. M. S. Baljon and S. A. Rizvi, the leading experts on Shah Wali Allah, commented on the first draft and helped to solve the problems about the spuriousness of *Al-Balagh al-Mubin* and its probable origin.

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Saints and Dargahs in the Indian Subcontinent: A Review

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Since medieval times Islam has experienced a tension between 'orthodoxy' and Sufism, and over the centuries Muslims everywhere have remained divided over the question of whether the veneration of Sufis (referred to as saints in Africa and in the Indian subcontinent) can legitimately be considered a part of Islam. To orthodox Muslims such veneration has been a source of great embarrassment and even shame, and nothing would be dearer to their hearts than the purging of the cult of saints from Islam. But this opposition notwithstanding, *piri-muridi* has persisted all over the Islamic world.

As is well known, the development and eventual supremacy of the 'law' invested orthodox Islam with a rather extreme impersonality, and, consequently, 'It was as a reaction against this legal formulation of Islam, that the early pietistic asceticism changed definitely into what is technically known as Sufism with its proper ethos.' (Rahman, 1979, 130). In contradistinction to the cold and unemotional formalism of the legalists, Sufism introduced in religious devotion a strong personal and individualized element. The intellectual and religious springboard for this 'deviation' in Islam was provided by the development of the doctrine of *tawakkul* or trust in God, which, to quote Rahman again, 'directly led to the central concept of the relationship between man and God.... The twin concepts of love and grace fused into one sentiment.' (1979, 130). It is not difficult to realize that saint-veneration came into existence and has persisted because the saints inspired confidence, particularly among the masses, who turned to them for spiritual guidance. For such Muslims the Sufis had brought Allah and divinity within reach. Thus, while not exactly setting up a rival Islam, they came to rival the ulama. The appeal of Sufis, however, has not been

confined to the masses. A mighty emperor like Akbar, as well as lesser-known Muslim kings in India, have paid homage to Sufi saints; and, in modern times Zia-ul Haq of Pakistan, notwithstanding fundamentalism and orthodoxy, included in his itinerary to India a pilgrimage to such well-known *dargahs* as those of Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi and Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti in Ajmer. This is in keeping with a popular belief among many Indian Muslims, that seven pilgrimages to Ajmer are equal to performing a *hajj*.

While emotional attachment and loyalty of faith in Sufis have mystical roots and religious overtones, the hold of the saints over their followers has not rested exclusively on these grounds: Secular and mundane considerations—in sociological terms 'magical'—have been equally important. As is well known, the saints have provided the hope to their followers of various this-worldly, material favours. Indeed, several Sufi orders had little pretensions of having anything to do with mysticism. Thus, in any effort to understand the phenomenon of saint and dargah veneration, due recognition must be given to the social and psychological factors that are an integral part of this phenomenon. A sociological explanation concerning the source of the tremendous appeal of saints among both urban and rural people has been advanced by Gellner, according to whom

> Urban Sufi mysticism is an *alternative* to the legalistic, restrained, arid Islam of the ulama. Rural and tribal Islam is a substitute for it. In the one case, a substitute for it is required because though its endorsement is desired, it is in its proper and urban form locally *unavailable* or is unusable in the tribal context. (1972a, 309)

This perceptive comment explains the support the Sufis received from their followers; this not only inspired them to face the wrath of the ulama but even to undergo persecution and, at times, execution. In such saint-veneration we see an example of the triumph of sociological reality over the stern formalism of legalists.

With these introductory observations, I propose now to review some articles that deal with various aspects of Sufi cults and dargahs in India, Nepal and Pakistan. The six articles selected have been chosen at random. As such, there is no thematic unity in them, except that all the articles are based on empirical/historical data and emphasize the sociological dimension of the concerned pheno-

menon. The present review does not consider the mystical aspects of Sufism.

The first article is Marc Gaborieau's 'Saints and Their Cults'. Based upon fieldwork in Nepal, this is a highly informative account of the social organization of Sufi cults.

Gaborieau has described different forms of the cult of saints and defined its functions for the Muslims of the subcontinent, as well as its impact upon the Hindus. He has to be commended for the latter, because it was through the Sufis that the subcontinent saw the best part of Hindu-Muslim integration. Veneration of saints was a common religio-cultural bond and served as one of the most powerful integrative mechanisms between the two communities. It was the personal and spiritual influence of the various saints that, to some extent, allowed for the peaceful coexistence of the two communities for several centuries on the Indian subcontinent. One reason why communal harmony stands ruptured today is because the integrative role of the saints and their dargahs has been undermined by the forces of modernization.

The cults, Gaborieau points out, are marked by a high degree of institutionalization, having well-established and often highly organized shrines. He then proceeds to differentiate between *mazar*, *dargah* and *khanqah*. The first is a notch above the common *qabr* or simple grave. The qabr is transformed into a mazar once a dead person begins to be venerated as a saint. Dargah, on the other hand, is a nobler term, meaning palace or royal court, and applies to more complex types of shrines, as, for example, the dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya in New Delhi. Ecologically, the dargah has a considerably more expansive centre and includes a number of courtyards, a pool, a *naubat khana* (music house), etc. The khanqah refers to a hospice and comes into existence, if the saint was also a member of a Sufi order. Thus the author provides information on the hierarchy that exists in cult organizations.

Turning next to the behavioural aspects of cults, Gaborieau lists four common elements. The first is personal visits to the shrine. Next, there are the offerings which the worshipper has to bring in cash or kind. Third, there is the *fatiha*, which has to be recited, and, finally, the guardians of the shrine and the worshippers share the offerings which the latter have brought to the dargah. The annual *'urs* (Arabic: wedding) may also be said to be a common element and commemorates the saint's death. This celebration has both

sacred and profane characteristics and the rituals involved are both individual and collective. In the profane part, there is the same mixture of commercial activities and entertainment as is found at the shrines of Hindu deities.

As regards the question of what functions the cult of saints fulfils, the author observes that these depend on who the devotees are, how they conceive of the saints and their powers, what roles the saints play in the lives of individual devotees and for the community as a whole.

Addressing himself next to the phenomenon of saint-veneration (which, it may be said, often borders on 'worship'), Gaborieau enlightens us that medieval thought had given great importance to saint 'worship' by 'constructing a whole intellectual scheme according to which it was the saints who governed the universe. It was, therefore, quite legitimate to address the saints directly.' (p. 299). This doctrine, the author adds, was widely accepted in the Muslim world. In support of this he quotes a writer who lived about a thousand years ago in Lahore, according to whom 'God has made the saints the governors of the universe. . . . Through the blessing of their advent the rain falls from heaven and through the purity of their lives the plants spring up from the earth, and through their spiritual influence the 'Muslims gain victories over the unbelievers'.

Gaborieau then dwells upon the universality or specificity of the various saints. Thus, we have Mu'inuddin Chishti, the first great propagator of Islam in the subcontinent. He represents the universal saint; the entire subcontinent, and even beyond, knows about him. In contrast are 'local' saints whose influence is confined to a few villages, a town, or at most a region. Here Gaborieau mentions the interesting case of the *panch* (five) *pirs* who are particularly venerated among the lower classes. The identity of 'the five' keeps changing from place to place. In some places these include the prophet and his grandsons, in other places they are replaced by some other figures, while in still other places even a goddess of Hindu origin is introduced. Unfortunately, Gaborieau offers no explanation for this latter intrusion. Since his account is based upon fieldwork, he should have tried to fathom the reasons. One can perhaps only speculate that the Hindu goddess is either a concession to Hindu 'worshippers', or that in a syncretic situation Hindu deities are not alien and illegitimate entities for Muslim masses, and are therefore a part of the *panch pirs*.

A point of sociological relevance is that many of the local saints are supported only by given segments of the population, determined either by locality, social group, or professional group. There is thus a sort of a 'patron saint' situation here. For example, Khwaja Khizr protects all castes associated with water: washermen, water carriers and boatmen. Similarly, blacksmiths invoke the name of Hazrat Da'ud, who is none other than the Biblical king David. Oilmen (*teli*) and dyers (*rangrez*) follow saints whose family names refer to these professions, namely Hasan Teli and Pir Ali Rangrez. Interestingly enough, sweepers and cesspool cleaners also have a patron saint in Lal Beg. Besides being linked to various vocations, saints are also linked with specific types of favours. Given the great concern, bordering on obsession, for progeny that prevails among people in this part of the world, saints who are reputed to help overcome sterility are legion. Besides these, there are other 'specialists' who take care of various illnesses and afflictions. Thus, there is Sakhi Sarwar who renders succour in eye complaints; Makhdum Saheb exorcises the possessed; Shaikh Sadhu cures melancholy; Guga Pir and Shah Madar cure people who have been bitten by snakes, and so on.

This 'specialization' obviously suits the vast masses who have faith in saints and dargahs. Its strength lies in the fact that it allows for great choice and freedom to venerate whichever saint or saints the individual chooses. Moreover, there is also scope for social groups, professional groups and castes to latch on to saints of their choice. At the psychological level, such attachment provides for identity as well as security, both of which have been considerably important in pre-modern times in the lives of the rural and tribal communities of this subcontinent. These illustrations and their implications amply explain why saints have found a greater following among Muslim masses than have the ulama.

To conclude then, Gaborieau's article would seem to be particularly useful and profitable for readers uninitiated in the sociology of Sufi cults.

Next, I turn to Adrian C. Mayer's brief but informative and instructive article (1967) on pir and murshid.

Mayer begins by pointing out that a certain terminological confusion exists in the various writings in the area. He clarifies that in the function of providing spiritual guidance, pir and murshid are two separate roles; but these tend to be confusedly and interchangeably used. On the one hand,

Some writers refer to *pir* as a healer of specific physical and moral problems while the *murshid* is considered to be a spiritual guide, the giver of general, moral and . . . spiritual exhortations; in many cases, however, the *pir* and *murshid* may be the same. The implication is that the two functions may well be performed by different people or at least that one person is called by different names according to which of these roles he assumes. (p. 161)

On the other hand, the author says, a number of writers use the two terms synonymously; he gives the example of Titus, according to whom the spiritual guide is known as murshid, pir or *shaikh*. A survey of these varying usages leads Mayer to conclude that while the pir is a spiritual guide, as well as a provider of succour in various misfortunes like barrenness, marital problems, etc., the murshid's role is limited and does not cover non-spiritual or mundane functions.

This dichotomy of roles has an interesting implication. According to Mayer,

you can change your *pir* if you lose faith in him. But you can never change your *murshid*, once you have acknowledged him. The *pir* becomes your *murshid* only if you see him perform a *miracle* and then only if your heart tells you that he is indeed a *murshid*. If he is in purdah (dead) you can feel his miraculous power at his tomb. Otherwise, however powerful he may be for other people, he remains a *pir* for you. (p. 163)

This observation clearly brings out the emotional force of the relationship between the guide and his follower, which can never be achieved by the ulama.

Further, Mayer's point that a better understanding would be provided by comparing 'a village paying homage to a single *pir* with one in which a number of *pirs* were acknowledged by different people of different status' is very perceptive, and so also is his observation that 'constancy of followers can result in a considerable complexity of organization amongst *pirs* themselves.' (p. 164) Indeed, a matter of considerable sociological interest and relevance is the author's remark that 'sometimes the descendants of *pirs* have divided disciples amongst themselves, in a way reminiscent of the division of clients by artisans under the *seypi* (*jajmani*) system. Moreover, disciples of the founders of shrines have themselves become *pirs* and *murshids*, and a hierarchy of *pirs* has in some cases emerged.' (p. 164)

Next, Mayer touches upon the very interesting dimension of the involvement of pirs in politics. Those familiar with Pakistan know that various pirs have played an important role in the politics of that country. As a matter of fact, even in undivided India Pir Pagaro and the Pir of Manki Sharif were influential in the region that has now become part of Pakistan. This influential role is possible not only by virtue of spiritual eminence but also of material affluence. The secular possessions of the pirs include large holdings and considerable wealth accumulated through donations. This makes it possible for the pirs to elevate themselves to the position of important employers, and thus build up an entire network of political alliances and influence. 'The more important *pirs* can influence a wider circle through their position as *murshids* than lesser *pirs*. Moreover, the guardianship of a shrine may be divided among a large number of descendants, many of whom may have gone into other employment but who can form a body of supporters.' (p. 165) To add to this is the fact that most, though not all, pirs constitute a sort of a religio-social club. The importance of pirs' political support is brought out by a study, quoted by Mayer, in which a candidate, though generally disliked by the concerned voters, managed to win an election because a pir preached his cause for two days, especially among the women of the village. Cases are also known in which pirs themselves have run for elections and have got elected.

However, this influence should not be exaggerated. Thus, Mayer is of the opinion that the pirs have probably lost influence over the more educated voters (twenty years have elapsed since Mayer published his article, and it may well be that further erosion of the pirs' influence has occurred in these two decades). Also, such factors as kinship loyalty or village loyalty exert pressure on political choices. Mayer concludes by saying, 'Doubtless, the influence and power of pirs varies from region to region, from town to village and from *pir* to *pir*.' (p. 167) He offers some research suggestions, chief among which is that there should be an examination of the role of pirs in the wider social system, of which electoral activities, like the one mentioned earlier, is one example. He feels that 'such a study could be linked to a consideration of the institution's significance in different parts of the subcontinent since there is evidence of the existence of this phenomenon in Bangladesh, as well as in India, the existence of *pir*-brother ties is part of a system of ritual kinship in central India.' (p. 169) Obviously, as Mayer himself

cautions, 'More detailed data need to be collected for these and other cases before an adequate comparison can be attempted.' (p. 169) It is, indeed, regrettable that students of Indo-Pak Islam have devoted very little attention to this interesting aspect of *piri-muridi*.

One of the few exceptions is provided by P. Lewis who, in his article 'Pirs, Shrines and Pakistani Islam' (1984), refers to the political, social and economic functions of the pirs of Golra Sharif, a shrine located some eleven miles from Rawalpindi in Pakistan.

The Golra pirs, Lewis observes, are not expected to be apolitical. Thus, Pir Mihir Ali had supported in the 1920s, in undivided India, the Khilafat movement in which Mahatma Gandhi, too, played a crucial role. In the 1965 Indo-Pak war the pir had exhorted his murids through radio and television to fight against India on the ground that this war was a *jihad*. The pir was equally concerned about the 'internal' jihad which had erupted on account of the 1977 domestic upheaval in Pakistan. Every evening he would sermonize his murids to the effect that the government headed by Bhutto 'was a corrupt dictatorship and to oppose such a government was as necessary as launching a *jihad* against infidels'. (1984, p. 21)

Occasionally, the shrine also serves as an agency of law enforcement. Thus, any local person suspected of being involved in criminal activity is brought to Golra and made to swear his innocence before the shrine; the assumption being that in such a hallowed place no individual would dare lie.

The economic resources of Golra Sharif come from the collection of *zakat* and *'ushr*, which the pir utilizes as his personal assets. These funds are used for a variety of purposes, such as dowry for daughters of widows, loans without interest to murids whose commercial ventures face financial difficulties. Interestingly enough, the pir also functions as a business-promoting and employment agency. The pir's network of contacts with high-ranking officials, military personnel and murids, dispersed throughout the Middle East, provides him with scope for settling his murids in various positions. Similarly, through the good offices of the pir, contractors (who are his murids) are able to secure contracts; and, once such contracts are bagged, labourers and technicians are recruited from among the pir's followers.

Finally, the author points out that besides the pir-murid relationship, there is also a network of mutual assistance which exists among murids of the same pir. This is known as the 'pir-bhai' relationship,

and 'can take precedence over the kin relationship in the event of a clash'. (p. 22) In addition, such relationships also provide contacts which cut across towns and villages.

Thus, Lewis's article provides useful empirical data and insights regarding the existential dimension of pir-murid relationships.

A useful contribution concerning research sources is provided by Richard Eaton's 'The Profile of Popular Islam in Pakistani Punjab.' (1978) Eaton's attempt is 'to examine the extent to which a single type of source material, the *murid* register, can shed light on the structure and development of popular Islam in Pakistani Punjab.' The author's general argument is 'that this source can yield important insights not only into folk Islam, but also into the economic and social history of the area covered by it.' He further adds, 'In fact, one might even suggest that insofar as it provides specific data concerning the residence, social group, and occupation of the individuals named in them, the *murid* register is comparable to the British census reports for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' (p. 75)

In his description of various research sources, Eaton first discusses the usual sources, such as folk traditions, legends and stories that are orally transmitted among the relevant murids. These form a part of popular poetry and songs current in the region. The second source comprises the tracts and commentaries written by the pirs for the edification of their murids. When these pertain to the more important pirs, they are available at the relevant pir's shrine, as well as in such outlets as the various Urdu bazars of Lahore and other major urban centres. Then, there are the *malfuzat*, i.e. the sayings of a great pir as recorded and compiled by his murids. After briefly describing these, the author comes to the murid registers, which, he points out, are more difficult to find and have never, to Eaton's knowledge, been used by scholars of Islam or historians.

These registers, we are informed, are simply a list of the murids of a particular pir which the latter compiles and retains for a variety of reasons. Such a register records, alongside the name of each murid, the village of his/her residence. More importantly, it also indicates the *biradari* of the murid. Incidentally, the murid register also includes information on non-Muslims and *jinns*.

Analysis of the registers yields three kinds of information: first, the changing geographical influence of the order; second, the order's

changing appeal to various economic or occupational groups in the society; and, third, the changing social composition of the order in terms of the biradaris.

The author provides an example of interesting sociological data which the register can supply by following the record of the murids of Haji Mohammed. Starting with the seventeenth century, Eaton says that at that time there was no particular occupational or economic concentration; there were simply six to nine murids in each of the following disparate groups: landlords, cultivators, village-goods producers, service groups, religious functionaries and mendicants. But by the mid nineteenth century the murids had become dramatically concentrated within just two major groups: cultivators and the village proletariat. Landlords, government functionaries, merchants and mendicants had virtually or entirely disappeared. Finally, from 1970 to the time of Eaton's study in 1975, another change had occurred. There had been a proportional increase in the number of murids belonging to the most inferior occupational categories, namely leatherworkers and menials, including a whole range of such trades as potters, blacksmith, weavers, and so on.

On the basis of this case study, Eaton sets out to refute the view held by scholars like Gibb, Lewis and Anthony Johns that Sufi orders functioned as institutional vehicles for the organization and expansion of particular trade or artisan guilds. The order in reference here—Naushahi—has never been exclusively identified with any single such group; on the contrary, it has covered the entire gamut of village artisans.

Eaton also draws attention to the fact that, due to the inclusion of the non-proletarian cultivators, this particular order led to an integration of the cultivators and the village proletariat and thus presented a situation which was in contradistinction to that of at least one research which, following the orthodox Marxian line, found class antagonisms to exist in the villages of Pakistani Punjab. Indeed, among the cultivators and the proletariat the order (at the time of writing) still cut across all significant divisions of kinship, craft and class.

One other significant point to which Eaton draws our attention is that these registers provide concrete evidence that viable Islamic institutions may exist without any necessary ties with urban centres. The presence of a completely rural orientation of this particular

order is noteworthy inasmuch as various scholars have invariably considered and emphasized that Islam essentially has an urban character. Refuting this popularly-held view, the author further points out that, in the region of pre-Partition western Punjab, the basis of an Islamic society had rested in the countryside, with the urban areas being dominated to a considerable extent by a Hindu population. Evidently, it was the Sufi orders which provided rural roots to the former.

It is a pity, and Eaton does lament this point, that while the murid registers provide valuable data on the changes that have occurred over the decades, they do not dissect the causes underlying these changes. Eaton concludes by observing that 'examination of more such *murid* registers may help us reconstruct the evolution of popular Islam and its integration with various social groups in the medieval early modern and contemporary periods.' (p. 91)

The foregoing summary will have indicated that Eaton's paper is a very valuable contribution; it has brought to light a virtually unknown source of value for research scholars. Also, his sociological analysis is very penetrating and, as such, lends further significance to his contribution.

I now turn to two other essays whose locale is in India: first, the unusual paper by Asim Roy, 'The *Pir* Tradition: A Case Study in Islamic Syncretism in Traditional Bengal', 1982. Roy has challenged the orthodox view that the pir tradition represents a deviation from true Islam and is an affront to Islamic orthodoxy. Instead, Roy advances the view that the syncretic tradition was as useful to the cause of Islam in Bengal as the later purificatory-revivalist movements.

The author, first of all, makes the interesting observation that in Bengal the 'worship' of pirs extended far beyond the range of saints and holy men and, in fact, there existed an entire pantheon which included apotheosized soldiers, pioneering settlers on reclaimed waste lands, metamorphosed Hindu and Buddhist divinities and anthropomorphized animistic spirits and beliefs. The phenomenon was inevitable because most converts were, initially at least, ill-grounded in Islamic religious precepts, practices and traditions, and remained attached to and rooted in their pre-existing non-Muslim traditions.

The author then goes on to make the perceptive observation that the hiatus which existed between the exogenous Great Tradition

of Islam and the endogenous little traditions was further widened because of the contempt of *ashraf* and the orthodox towards the Bengali language. The latter were not prepared to accept Bengali as a vehicle for the diffusion of Islamic religious and cultural expression. In the face of this unsympathetic attitude, there was the danger that Bengali neo-converts could have been pushed back into Hinduism and reabsorbed by it. In this delicate situation, Roy points out, stepped a new group of elites, with roots in the Bengali culture, who identified themselves both with Islam's Great Tradition as well as with local masses and their needs. This empathy arose out of the fact that they hailed from a different social class than the orthodox ashraf, and, therefore, lacked the ashraf's elitist and arrogant outlook. Consequently, these individuals were able to break the religio-cultural domination of the orthodox, who, by virtue of their alien cultural orientation and elitist approach, had not allowed the local Bengali language to become the vehicle for the dissemination and diffusion of Islam—without realizing that their use of a foreign medium was thwarting the spread of the religion in Bengal.

However, Roy adds that the dissolution of 'linguistic apartheid' alone was not enough, and the mere switching over to Bengali as medium could not have brought Islam closer to the masses. In order for an alien religion like Islam to be intelligible to the rural and tribal populace of Bengal, the medium of cultural communication also necessitated the adoption and integration of idioms and symbols rooted in Bengali culture. This, in turn, required an integration of the exogenous and endogenous traditions in order to surmount the distance and discontinuity that had prevailed between the two in the Bengal situation. As can well be imagined, the efforts to forge a link between the two traditions brought about a synthesis which made Islam culturally more intelligible, and hence more easily acceptable, to the Bengali masses. To be sure, liturgical matters remained within the framework of Islam's prescriptions (of the Hanafi school), but in all other matters the local cultural idioms, symbols and nuances thickly covered and coated the Bengali Muslims' belief patterns as well as practices.

How in this dramatic transformation, which gave rise to a typically local and syncretic Islam, did the aforementioned 'missionaries' serve as preceptors and guides, and come to be looked upon as pirs? Roy explains that the efforts of these pirs crystallized into a vast

corpus of Muslim Bengali literature which incorporated Islamic religious, semi-religious, and secular historical traditions, along with mystical writings. These texts eventually came to educate and Islamize the masses.

In the latter part of his paper the author has focused attention upon those aspects of the various writings of these pirs which illustrate the presentation of Islamic history and religious concepts in a Hinduized framework, so as to make them more easily comprehensible to the neo-converts. It is a sociological axiom that mere cultural *transfers* seldom succeed. What is needed is cultural *translation*, and this is precisely what these unusual pirs did. A point worthy of mention pertains to the manner in which the polarity between the exogenous and endogenous traditions was sought to be removed or reduced. We are told that efforts were made to find parallels between the two traditions, and Islamic characters and situations were then presented in terms recognizable by the local people. Further, the struggles that had ensued between Islam and non-Islamic religious forces in the initial history of Islam were depicted as struggles between Islam and Hinduism, even though these battles had been fought in the region of Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, a *pir* with a considerable following went to the extent of equating the Islamic concept of *nabi* with the Hindu concept of *avatara*, and introduced the Arab prophet on the Bengali scene as the 'avatara of *Kal-Yug*'. In the same vein, the mythological rather than theological aspects of cosmogony were emphasized in this literature, consequent to which the doors were opened for Hindu creation myths to move in.

The author has concluded his absorbing and extremely informative paper by observing that in the Bengal situation Muslim mysticism tended to assume a midway position between the two extremes of qualified non-dualism and pantheistic monism. The mystical concepts of the concerned pirs (and equally appropriately, it may be added 'cultural mediators') tended to lean towards an absolute non-dualistic model. Regarding metaphors and analogies employed to bring out the essence of the relationship between God and the world, Roy points out that such expressions as 'the formless in the form' or 'heat in the fire', or 'hardness in clay', etc. were used in keeping with their emphasis on both syncreticism and mysticism. These mediators underscored the superiority of esoteric to exoteric, scriptural to scholastic knowledge.

The last article I consider is from another region in India, Kerala; it provides further evidence of the regional variety and syncretic elements which have characterized the cult of saints in the subcontinent. I deal now with Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadhara Menon's paper on 'Nerccas: Saint-Martyr Worship Among the Muslims of Kerala' (1978).

The *nerccas* are the largest public festivals of the Mappilas and are a variant of 'saint worship'. These are eleborate ceremonials which nominally combine Islamic elements with certain features of indigenous folk festivals. Thus, while the focal point of each nercca is the reverence shown to a pir, shaikh or shahid, the festival as such is conducted within a ritual framework which is based upon the traditional form of worship of local folk deities.

The most important offerings at the nerccas are presented by corporate groups of all communities. Village organization of untouchables, craft guilds and occupational associations bring their gifts from late afternoon onwards, frequently continuing throughout the night.

The literal meaning of nercca, a Malayali word, is 'to make a vow'. Although several variants of its connotation are prevalent, all these indicate commitment to 'worship' (if one's requests for various favours are granted), at a mosque or even before a non-Muslim deity. The basic ritual of each nercca is the presentation of offering at the tomb of a pir. The ritual is organized by the leaders of the Mappila ulama, known as *tannals*. All critical decisions concerning the holding or otherwise of the nerccas rest with these tannals; this feature is suggestive of the powerful position of these individuals in the social structure.

It has been already indicated that the nerccas are a syncretic celebration. Thus, in addition to the venerating of the saint, the occasion is used, in many cases, for a series of informal competitions of music and dance events. These performances, along with material presents, mostly in the form of foodstuff offered by the various groups, reflect the social and occupational background of the performers. A fact worthy of note, towards which the authors have drawn attention, is that in most cases the performers first give a display before the senior tannal, and only after that at the tomb of the pir, thus reaffirming the central role in these ceremonies of the tannal, as well as their prestigious position in the community.

The authors are of the opinion that the nerccas are Muslim

adaptations of non-Muslim festivals because of two reasons. First, nerccas, like the Hindu festivals of *yelas* and *purams*, are seasonal; all three appear to be linked with harvesting. Second, the nerccas share a common ceremonial pattern with the yelas and purams. However, the significance of the nerccas is not confined to their syncretic character, and to the fact that local Harijans are also participants in them. The nerccas also bring out many of the specifically Islamic aspects of Mappila practice, not witnessed of devotional religion. On account of the variety of functions/needs that these festivals fulfil, reformists and puritans have found it difficult to wean away the Mappilas from the nerccas. Indeed, the nerccas do generate a conflict between the Great Tradition and the little tradition but (at least, till the time of writing of the article), it was the latter that was triumphant, and had not been dislodged.

In the above review, readers will surely miss articles that deal with the important role saints and dargahs have played in the lives of Muslim women, and, in India, in the lives of non-Muslim women also. For some inexplicable reason empirical studies on veneration of Sufis by women (who are indeed the mainstay of saint veneration) appears to have been neglected. To be sure, writings on Muslim women have given considerable recognition to the fact that visitation of the saint's shrines have had a special meaning for Muslim women. Thus according to Smith: 'The shrine is a place in which women can be together, or alone, can be in communication with a personage considered in some senses to be able to help them with the kinds of personal problems in which the high God may seem too remote to be interested.' (1987, 244)

But it is not the inner religious experience (as indicated in the quotation) alone that draws Muslim women to saints and dargahs. An equally important factor is social-structural. The segregation of the sexes has prevented Muslim women from participating fully in public prayers and worship. There, therefore, had to be a substitute for the mosque, and the dargah is this 'functional alternative'. An additional social-structural reason for women's strong faith in and devotion to saints arises out of the insecurities and anxieties to which women are prone on account of their deeper involvement in the recurring crises of family life. Anne Fuller, on the basis of her study of a Lebanese village, has observed, 'Women through child bearing and child rearing, feel greater exposure to the capricious agencies of life, and since they do not attend the mosque,

they must look elsewhere for support.' (1961, p. 83). But it is not children alone that make women feel insecure; the tyranny or capriciousness of their spouses, entanglements of their husbands with other women, or illness and economic insecurities of the bread-winner are potent existential reasons for women to turn to saints for succour since to repeat Smith's excellent words 'the high God may seem too remote to be interested', in these mundane problems.

In this review, it may be recalled, we have discussed articles that were concerned with the anthropological/sociological dimension of Sufism rather than its religio-mystical aspects. One important point that needs emphasizing here is that in its sociological variant the various Sufi brotherhoods came into close contact with different craft guilds and helped promote economic interests, as much as religious consciousness. Traditional and non-sociological writings on Sufism have tended to miss this dimension. The present review has shown that for a fuller understanding of the phenomenon of saint and dargah veneration it is necessary to comprehend both the religio-mystical as well as the sociological-existential dimensions. It is in this context that one appreciates the pertinence of Gellner when he observes, 'But the most important factor, at least sociological, seems to be the inescapable requirements of religious organization and leadership'. (1972) These functions perhaps become particularly crucial in non-Islamic states where politics and religion are not linked. 'Sufism', Gellner has further pointed out, 'provides a theory, terminology and technique of leadership, far more generally usable in tribe, village or town under government or in anarchy. . . . Sufism is a kind of Reformation-in-reverse. It creates a quasi-church.' Now that Pakistan and Bangladesh are officially proclaimed, further comparative studies in these countries, along with India and Nepal, should help us in substantiating Gellner's formulation and thus enriching our sociological understanding of this fascinating area of Islamic studies.

One last observation that may be made is that, today, there is an urgent need for those interested in the sociology of religion to study the impact that modernization has had on saint veneration and dargah-going. It is generally believed that in recent times the influence of Sufis has waned among Muslims; the resurgence of Islamic orthodoxy and fundamentalism are also believed to have diluted the attachment Muslim masses have had for the saints and dargahs. But these are assumptions, which need to be backed by

hard empirical data. Also, it would be relevant to study whether the cultural integration which the saints had once provided to the rural masses of the subcontinent has undergone any change in recent decades. In the Indian context, particularly, such studies would be of great relevance and importance.

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Qawwali and Mahfil-i Sama'*

OMAR KHALIDI

An area of neglect within research on Islam in India is *qawwali*, or *mahfil-i sama'*, the devotional song and music assembly held by Sufis at *dargahs* and attended by *murids* (disciples of the Sufis) and other uninitiated devotees. It is therefore heartening to see the publication of *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali*, by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi. The book is based on a Ph.D. dissertation originally submitted to the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, in 1981.

Any discussion of qawwali must be preceded by an analysis of the place of music (religious or otherwise) in Islamic society. There has been an ongoing controversy in the Muslim community over the sanction and legitimacy of music. Regardless of the eventual outcome of this debate, or some broad consensus on it, it cannot be ignored that Islamic society has sought through social pressure, religious directives, and juridical pronouncements to control the vocal and instrumental arts in order to ensure that they contribute towards producing and sustaining a moral community. Thus the music which leads the listener to be more obedient to Allah has been encouraged; that which leads away from God and His directives has been avoided. The recitation of the Quran, therefore, has become the most important example of pitched sound-art in the whole of the Muslim world, and it has been used in a wide variety of religious and secular situations. Other genres of musical art have been appreciated, tolerated, or frowned upon according to their position.

* Review article of *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali*, by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986). The author has summarized the main findings of this work in 'The Mahfil-e-Sama': Sufi Practice in the Indian Context'. *Islam and the Modern Age*, vol. 17, no. 3 (August 1986), pp. 133–65.

In India (including Bangladesh and Pakistan), an early Sufi, 'Ali al-Hujwiri (d. *c.* AD 1071) regarded listening to music permissible for mystics, except under some very rigid conditions; it was not to be listened to without a deep spiritual urge, only after long intervals, and only in the presence of one's spiritual preceptor. Of the four Sufi orders (Chishti, Suhrawardi, Naqshbandi and Qadiri) popular in India, the Chishtis alone sought ecstatic inspiration in music. The Suhrawardis were generally indifferent to it and recommended instead the chanting of the Quran; the Qadiris were opposed to music generally, and to instrumental music (*sama' bil-mazamir*) in particular. The Naqshbandi attitude to music was even more hostile. Despite the religious attitudes towards music ranging from wholehearted acceptance to complete rejection, the devotional assembly of Islamic mysticism called qawwali is popular throughout India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The occasion of qawwali performance is also called *sama'*, aptly defined by Bruce Lawrence as 'hearing chanted verse (with or without accompanying instruments) in the company of others also seeking to participate in the dynamic dialogue between a human lover and the Divine Beloved'.[1] Qawwali considered as music is usually a group song performed by *qawwals*, professional musicians who perform in groups led by one or two solo singers. Qawwals present mystical poetry in Persian, Hindi and Urdu (in that order of prestige) in a fluid style of alternating solo and group passages, characterized by repetition and improvisation. The vigorous drum accompaniment on the barrel-shaped *dholak* is reinforced by hand-clapping, while the small portable harmonium, usually in the hands of the lead singer, underscores the song melody. A qawwali song normally begins with an instrumental prelude on the harmonium; then an introductory verse is sung as a solo recitative without drums, leading directly into the song proper: a mystical poem set to a strophic tune and performed by the entire group of qawwals.

In eight long chapters Qureshi, an anthropologist and musician, discusses the various aspects of qawwali. In the Introduction she describes qawwali as 'the spiritual song that transports the mystic toward union with God'. She rightly distinguishes it from 'the

[1] Bruce Lawrence, 'The Early Chishti Approach to *sama'*', in *Islamic Society and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad*, ed. M. Israel and N. K. Wagle (Delhi: Manohar, 1983), p. 72.

popular version of Qawwali adapted for entertainment in clubs and on the screen.' Using the '*urs* of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi, she presents the qawwali experience at its most important occasion through a discussion of rituals associated with it, and the process of interaction between musicians and listeners, between music and audience response.

Qawwali experience, according to Qureshi, raises three kinds of questions: norms and behaviour in the qawwali ritual, including the relationship between musical and non-musical action; questions about sound; and relationship between musical and non-musical action in the performance of Qawwali. In order to answer the questions raised, she builds an analytic model for use as a tool based on anthropology, and western and Indian musicology. She begins the analysis in Chapter I with a consideration of the qawwali musical idiom based on the performer's own conceptions of the music. Structurally, qawwali music is seen as an idiom of north Indian music, characterized by distinctive musical feature derived from its religious function. A qawwali song model is outlined, but it lacks the dynamics of programming which only the performance process can account for. Four types of songs are identified as known to the qawwals: songs associated with Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, including ritual songs and Amir Khusrau's compositions; Sufi classics known to the Sufis and qawwals all over India; songs that form part of the performer's personal repertoire; and songs with wide popularity. To those unfamiliar with qawwali it may come as a surprise that the languages of these songs in order of preference are Hindi, Persian and Urdu. Contemporary Sufis who have both spiritual and literary standing are few. Maulana Shaykhayn Ahmad Shattari Kamil of Hyderabad is mentioned as one of the exceptions, whose *manqabat* (poem in praise of Hazrat Ali, the fourth Caliph), '*Ba tufayl-i daman-i Murtaza*' is widely sung. Qawwali songs in Panjabi and Sindhi are popular in Pakistan. The author describes the function of qawwali music as the presentation of mystical poetry in order to arouse mystical emotion in an assembly of listeners with spiritual needs that are both diverse and changing.

Chapter III goes into the belief system behind qawwali-Sufism, and a discussion of the composition of Indian Muslims. Unfortunately the author uncritically accepts the findings of recent sociologists who assert that Indian Muslims are divided into 'well-

born' and 'low-born' (*ashraf* and *ajlaf*, in Imtiaz Ahmad and others). Few Indian Muslims are familiar with these terms; fewer still understand them in the sense that sociologists and anthropologists do. Despite this imperfect understanding of the Muslim community, it is hard to improve Qureshi's characterization of the dargah as a 'quasi-feudal establishment in which a hereditary appropriating class of saintly representatives control the resources, whether they be property, revenue or offerings received from devotees.' (p. 93) In discussing the place of *sama'* (the listening of spiritual music), Qureshi alludes to the controversy among the Sufis on qawwali *with* music, but it is altogether too brief. In a full-length study of this kind, the avoidance of a sustained discussion of the question of the place of music in Sufi ideology is surprising. There is no dearth of literature on this topic.[2]

In the Indian context, the literature on sama' has been documented in *Qamus al-Kutub Urdu, vol. 1: Mazhabiyat* (Karachi: Anjuman-i Taraqq-i Urdu, 1961) edited and published under the supervision of Maulwi 'Abdullhaqq. In this bibliography as many as twenty-four works have been cited under samą'. Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi's *Haq al-Sama'* (Bijnor: 1935) has gone into several reprints. Many more can be cited: Mirza Ashfaq Salim, *A Note on Qawwali* (Islamabad: Lok Virsa Institute, 1975); *Music and*

[2] For instance, in Arabic we have the *Majmu'a al-Rasa'il al-Kubra* by Ibn Taymiyya (Cairo: rpt. 1966), the *Idah al-Dalalat fi Sama' al-Alat* by Abd al-Ghani al-Nablusi (Damascus: 1884). Modern Muslims who have written on the subject include Yusuf al-Qardawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam* (Indianapolis; Indiana, USA: American Islamic Trust, 1980); Lois L. al-Faruqi, 'The Shari'ah on Music and Musicians', in *Islamic Thought and Culture*, edited by Isma'il R. al-Faruqi (Washington, D.C.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982), pp. 27–52; 'Factors of Continuity in the Musical Cultures of the Muslim World', in *Progress Reports in Ethnomusicology* (New York), vol. I, no. 2 (1983–4), pp. 1–18; 'Music, Musicians and Muslim Law', in *Asian Music* (New York), vol. XVII, no. 1, (1985), pp. 3–36; Isma'il Hikmi, *Sama' dar Tasawwuf* (Tehran: Danishgah-i Tehran, 1359 Shamsi); Mahmud Sa'id ibn Muhammad Mamduh, *Tasnif al-Asma' bi Shuyukh al-Ijaza wa al-Sama' aw Imta' Uli al-Nazar bi Ba'd A'yan al-Qarn al-Rabi al-'Ashar* (Cairo: Dar al-Shabab li-Tiba'a, 1984—for the views of the fourth-century Hijri Muslim ulama on the subject); Samha El-Kholy, *The Function of Music in Islamic Culture, in the Period up to c. 1100* (Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1984).

Qawwali (Karachi: Pir Muhammad Ibrahim Trust 1975); Abdul Majid ibn Sardar Khan Muhammad, *Qawwali: Qur'an wa Sunnat aur Sulaha-i Ummat ki Nazar men* (Abbotabad: 1985). In the context of Turkey, one consults Ali Asani, 'Music and Dance in the Work of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi' in *Islamic Culture*, vol. 60, no. 2 (April 1986), pp. 41–55. It is probable that these works were not available to the writer. As stated earlier, Qureshi's portrayal of the dargah (the locale of most Qawwali occasions) is superb, as is her account of qawwals in the third chapter. One such qawwal claiming descent from the *qawwal-bachche* of Amir Khusrau's time, was Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi (1922–86). A brief article was published about him in *Times of India* (Sunday Magazine, 22 June 1986, p. VII) by Anees Jung.

Chapter IV deals with the structure of the qawwali event: the occasions, setting, seating arrangement of Sufi devotees and performers, as well as the procedure, listening process and responses of the assembled devotees at the time of sama'. Social and economic dimensions of the qawwali occasion are also discussed. A brief Chapter V is devoted to the analysis of how music and context interrelate in the performance. In the sixth chapter Qureshi deals with more restricted occasions of the sama': the *chilla mahfil* and the *hujra mahfil*. Tying in with the preceding chapter, which concentrated on the sama' performance in the form of specific instances, in the seventh chapter the same process is generalized into a coherent sequence, taking into consideration contextual and musical variables in a systematic outline of the performance process in the abstract. Chapter VIII tackles the question of how to programme qawwali music in performance by introducing contextual input into the sound-rule system. The conclusion sums up the entire study, which is throughout empirical. Ethnomusicologically literate readers will appreciate the book most, but students of Sufism in India will find it equally interesting. A glossary of qawwali and Sufi terms is provided. A good bibliography of relevant literature enhances the value of the book. Tables and charts summarize the contents of the study. The quality of the photographs, however, leaves much to be desired.

New Light on Bihar's Eminent Sufi Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri and His Times*

IQTIDAR HUSAIN SIDDIQUI

The Firdausi Sufi *silsila*, a branch of the celebrated Suhrawardi silsila, was begun by Shaikh Badruddin Samarqandi, an emigrant from Central Asia in the Sultanate of Delhi during the early years of Iltutmish's reign (1210–36). The compiler of the *Manaqib al-Asfiya*, a biographical dictionary of the Firdausi Sufis in India, states that if Shaikh Ruknuddin Firdausi had not succeeded his master, Shaikh Badruddin Samarqandi, the name of the branch would not have been changed from Suhrawardi to Firdausi. The spiritual successors of Shaikh Ruknuddin Firdausi called their branch of the silsila 'Firdausi' after their *pir's* surname in order to perpetuate his memory.[1] It may, however, be pointed out that Shaikh Badruddin Samarqandi was the *murid* (disciple) of Shaikh Saifuddin Sa'd Bakharzi, the *khalifa* (senior disciple, authorized to enrol murids in the silsila) of Shaikh Najmuddin Kubra (d. 1221) and, therefore, it is also probable that the Sufis of this branch might have called themselves 'Kubrawi', like their counterparts in Central Asia.

It is also worth noting that Shaikh Badruddin Samarqandi and his disciples had fully established themselves in Delhi before the Chishtis arrived in India. Shaikh Najmuddin Sughra, an important

*This article reviews the following two publications: *Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat* (A Table Laden With Good Things) of Shaikh Zain Badr 'Arabi, edited and translated by Paul Jackson, S.J. (Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delhi, pp. xx plus 1–174); and Paul Jackson, S.J., *The Way of a Sufi: Sharafuddin Maneri* (Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1987, pp. 278).

[1] Makhdum Shah Shu'aib Firdausi, *Manaqib al-Asfiya* (Calcutta: AH 1313), pp. 2–8, 124.

link in the chain of Firdausi silsila saints, had already been appointed the Shaikh ul-Islam (Minister for Religious Affairs) by Iltutmish. Shaikh Najmuddin Sughra was remarkable for his learning and strict adherence to Islamic orthodoxy.[2] He was called Sughra (junior) so that his association with Shaikh Najmuddin Kubra could be known to people. He died in the office of Shaikh ul-Islam during the reign of Iltutmish.[3]

The early Firdausi saints practised sobriety and considered the display by Sufi saints of miraculous power an irreligious practice, calculated to gain cheap popularity. They set traditions of austerity and emphasized its importance, so that their followers could also emulate them. Consequently, their influence remained confined to the elite in Delhi. With the emergence of Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri as a great Firdausi saint, a new chapter opened in the history of the Firdausi silsila in India.

Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri, who lies buried in the town of Bihar Sharif, was a leading saint with a wide reputation. The references contained in his *malfuzat* (collections of utterances) to the visitors to his *khanqah* show how his influence and popularity had spread in different parts outside Bihar. The aim of this essay is to comment on *Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat*, compiled by Shaikh Zain Badr, a learned disciple of Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri, and translated by Paul Jackson, SJ. This volume casts light on the fame and popularity enjoyed by the Shaikh, who received numerous people in his khanqah, listened to their various problems and helped them in diverse ways. The disciple who compiled the malfuzat of Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri was the learned man Shaikh Zain Badr Arabi.

Shaikh Zain Badr Arabi seems to have been interested only in the religious questions with which the Shaikh dealt when replying to queries made by learned or educated visitors. He did not think it worthwhile to include the Shaikh's utterances on the problems of the common man. Unlike the malfuzat of Shaikh Sharafuddin

[2] *Manaqib al-Asfiya*, p. 8. Some modern scholars have uncritically accepted the legendary account by later hagiographers to the effect that Sughra was dismissed by Iltutmish for his malicious nature and hostility to men of piety in general, and to Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi in particular. But the testimony of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya is of significance. According to him, Sughra died in his office and Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi was exiled by him to Badaun.

[3] Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad* (Lucknow: 1885), p. 144.

Yahya Maneri, the malfuzat of the Chishti saints, *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*, *Khayr al-Majalis*, *Jawami' al-Kilam*, etc. are richer with regard to the variety of questions dealt with. For instance, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh tells his visitors about the general prosperity during Alauddin Khalji's reign (1296–1316):

> How cheap and plentiful were things in those days, one may guess from the prices: In the winter no destitute person was found without a quilt. The upper part of the quilt, made of Makina (fine cloth designed in different patterns of colours) cost thirty *jitals*, while the lower part cost only twelve *jitals*. As for the wages of the cotton carder and the tailor, they did not exceed a *sashgani* (six annas). Today even one *tankah* (rupee) would not suffice (for their wages).[4]

Fortunately, we do come across revealing references to historical events and conditions contained in the discourses in the *Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat*. This adds to the value of the work as a source on the cultural and religious life of the Delhi Sultanate.

Moreover, the *Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat* contains interesting allusions to the important cities and towns, such as Sonargaon Lakhnauti in Bengal, Arwal and Rajgir in Bihar, Delhi, Panipat, etc., providing us with insights into the process of urbanization. We also find odd bits of information about the impact of the Indian environment on the Muslim elite. For instance, Qazi Ashrafuddin, a learned visitor, makes the query: 'How many times did the Prophet perform his spiritual prayer upside down (*salat-i ma'kus*) and did he do this as an ascetic exercise or with some other motive?' (p. 9). In reply the Shaikh says that the Prophet did it only once in order to gain divine love and the Sufis did it to follow his tradition. The translator remarks: 'The influence of yogic practices current at the time is evident in this statement' (Introduction, p. xix). Again, he comments:

> It is hard to see how orthodox scholars from Arab lands could possibly agree with this statement. It does tell us, however, that the practice was known to Sharafuddin and his contemporaries, and is one of the many examples of the influence of Hindu ascetical practices on the Sufis. Sharafuddin feels obliged to offer an explanation of the practice which links it to that of Muhammad (p. 11, fn. 2).

In adopting this ascetic exercise the Indian Sufis were not directly

[4] *Khair al-Majalis*, Aligarh: 1959), p. 240.

influenced by yogis. Long before their arrival in India, Sufis had adopted this practice in Central Asia under Buddhist influence. Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri's source of information is the *Fawa' id al-Fu'ad*, wherein the eleventh century Sufi saint, Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair is reported as having performed it. In the same anecdote this tradition is linked to the Prophet of Islam. The latter is said to have performed it only once.[5] Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri seems to have accepted uncritically what he read in standard or popular works on Sufis.

Likewise, we find useful material on the teachings of the Shaikh, as well as on his attitude to society. The picture of the Shaikh that emerges from the work is that of a liberal-minded and saintly man. He sided with those ulama who, before they issued a *fatwa*, always took into account the convenience of men, provided their action did not violate the Quranic law. For instance, in Sonargaon, people objected that the use of lime was not lawful because it was made of shellfish. But the Shaikh sided with those ulama who did not disapprove the use of lime as its prohibition would inconvenience a large number of *paan* addicts. In defence of the action of such ulama Shaikh Maneri said that things should be made easy for the people,

> because the path of Islam is a wide one. Whatever brings hardship upon the people is not permitted to be imposed upon them. Those things which have been prohibited by the text of the Book [i.e. the Quran] itself, even though people have accepted and became habituated to them, are not to be allowed simply to make things easy for the people. (p. 18)

It is generally held that the art of miniature painting was introduced in India by the Mughal emperors during the sixteenth century. But the sultans of Delhi appear to have been great patrons of the art of painting. The walls of their palaces were beautified by mural paintings. Shaikh Maneri's malfuzat corroborate the *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi* in this regard. Here we come across references both to mural and miniature paintings, patronized by the rich.

We also find biographical details on the Shaikh. During the early period of his life, when he lived alone with his God in the jungles of Rajgir, philanthropy was his life's mission:

[5] Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad* (the *malfuzat* of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya) (Lucknow: 1885), p. 7.

When I was in that old cave [in the hills of Rajgir], there was a military governor there. He did not have a very good way of dealing with the people, many of whom would come to me to get me to intercede on their behalf. I used to do so for each one of them. I would write down their requests, but a great number of people began to mob me for this purpose. From time to time my human nature asserted itself and I got annoyed. Shaikh Zada Chishti[6]—may God keep him safe—happened to be there at the time. It so happened that he had come to visit me in that place. He observed that this business proved vexatious for me on some occasions and that I grew annoyed. Afterwards he said: 'So you are annoyed. Be careful not to get annoyed. Take upon yourself the affliction of the people'. (p. 57)

Various bits on the presence of Muslim scholars who disseminated knowledge of Islamic sciences in outlying *wilayats* of the Delhi Sultanate are invaluable. The sultans of Delhi, in particular Muhammad bin Tughluq, took keen interest in creating centres of Islamic learning and culture in distant provinces for the consolidation of central authority. In Sonargaon and other places in Bengal, the Shaikh met Balkhi scholars catering to the educational and religious needs of Muslims there. They appear to have distinguished themselves as scholars of *tafsir* (exegesis of the Quran) and *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet) (p. 105).

The work under review also reveals the personal qualities of the Shaikh. A well-read scholar, the Shaikh differed from other educated Muslims in forming an opinion about the historical personages of Islam. He was careful not to express adverse opinions without good reason. Once, the compiler of the malfuzat asked him: 'What is meant by saying that Yazid [the Omayyid Caliph] should not be cursed?' The Shaikh replied:

The reason is that an inferior should not curse anyone who is superior to him. Yazid was one of the companions or at least one of the succeeding generation. Hence, it is not proper. Again, it is related that the Prophet said: 'I had requested pardon of God for whatever has transpired among my companions' hence, they have been forgiven. For this reason also Yazid should not be cursed (p. 87).

[6] The Delhi Sultanate had gained a reputation throughout the Muslim world for its centres of Islamic learning. Travellers came from different countries to Delhi for enlightenment. Shaikhzada Chishti, who had come from the modern region of Afghanistan to Delhi, also went to Bihar to meet the Firdausi saint. This casts light on the latter's fame.

As a matter of fact the Shaikh expresses the orthodox point of view in this regard. Further, it fits in with his own teaching about the need to forgive all, even one's own enemies, as correctly pointed out by Jackson (p. 90, fn. 8).

The discourse given by the Shaikh in the thirty-seventh assembly shows that the apocryphal malfuzat of Khwaja 'Uthman Haruni, the compilation of which was attributed to Shaikh Mu'inuddin Sijzi, had gained currency and was also regarded by Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri as authentic. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh and Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz considered it fake.[7] But it is worth recalling that in matters of Islamic faith the great Firdausi saint did not accept anything uncritically. He had a great regard for Shaikh ibn al-'Arabi, but he did not accept his doctrine of *Wahdat al-wujud* (Unity in essence of the Creator and Created) blindly. As in the *Maktubat-i Sadi*, so in this work he expresses his belief that union between man and God was not possible. For instance, he writes:

> Sufi masters are of the opinion that, in the fourth stage, such a surfeit of the dazzling divine light becomes manifest to the pilgrim that every single existing particle that lies within his vision becomes concealed in the very lustre of that light just as particles in the air are lost to sight on account of the brightness of the light emanating from the Sun. This occurs not because the particles have ceased to exist but rather because the intensity of the sunlight makes it impossible that anything other than this concealment should result. In the same way, it is not true that a person becomes God for God is infinitely greater than any man—nor has the person really ceased to exist, for ceasing to exist is one thing and becoming lost to view quite another![8]

Unlike Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri, his Chishti counterpart, Shaikh Gesudaraz, popularly known as Bandanawaz, considered Ibn al-'Arabi a man who had gone astray and ceased to be a true believer. Gesudaraz writes about Ibn al-Arabi: 'If he [Ibn 'Arabi] were alive during my times, I would have made him conscious of "beyond-the-beyond" by taking him up (into the spiritual realm),

[7] *Khair al-Majalis*, pp. 52–3; Sayyid Muhammad Akbar Husaini, *Jawam' al-Kilam* (Kanpur: AH 1356), p. 143.

[8] Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri, *Maktubat-i Sadi*, English translation: '*The Hundred Letters*', Paul Jackson's comment.

and would have revived his belief (*iman*) and converted him into a Muslim.'[9]

A mistake that needs correction is the word 'Sanjari'; Sijzi should be used because Shaikh Mu'inuddin Chishti hailed from the territory of Sijzistan (in modern Afghanistan) and Sijzi was his surname. Like him, other immigrants from the same land adopted Sijzi as their surname in order to perpetuate the memory of their association with it. Finally, the translator/editor deserves congratulation for making accessible to modern scholars an important source of information on culture during the fourteenth century.

The Way of a Sufi: Sharafuddin Maneri is an illuminating study of the life, teaching and religious philosophy of the great Sufi thinker of fourteenth-century India. Earlier, Paul Jackson translated into English the first collection of the Shaikh's hundred epistles (*Maktubat-i Sadi*) and the collection of his discourses (*Khwan-i Pur Ni'mat*), respectively. These works not only arouse our interest in delineating the important social role performed by a great historical personage but also extend our understanding of complex social phenomena in the Sultanate of Delhi. The importance of the man studied and the great labour put in by the author call for careful assessment.

Besides an introduction and two appendices at the end, the work consists of three parts. First, the author tells us that when studying the collection of 100 epistles (called *Maktubat-i Sadi*), he became convinced of their importance in the context of Sufism and of the history of spirituality: the *Maktubat-i Sadi* 'has to be classified as a work of spirituality, not one about spirituality.' (p. 2)

Thereafter he discusses the nature of the sources utilized in the preparation of his book. Different collections of the Shaikh's discourses and epistles, compiled by Zain Badr 'Arabi, a devout and learned disciple, are the major and most authentic sources of information on the life and missionary work of the Shaikh. As for the later biographical literature on the Shaikh, it is full of hagiographic embroidery. The author has first evaluated its authenticity scientifically and then used it critically in reconstructing the portrait of the Shaikh and his times.

[9] Gesudaraz, *Khatima*; pp. 18–19, cited by S. S. Khusro Hussaini, '*Shuhud* vs *Wujud*: A Study of Gesudaraz', *Islamic Culture*, LIX, no. 4 (October 1985), pp. 323–9.

Chapter I furnishes for the first time interesting information on the antiquity of the town of Maner, the Muslim conquest of Bihar at the close of the twelfth century, and the socio-political milieu of the Shaikh in Bihar, including the life of the peasantry in the countryside. Miscellaneous sources, such as Sanskrit inscriptions, legends about the early Muslim warrior saints in Bihar, thirteenth-century Indo-Persian histories, and the eye-witness account left by the Tibetan monk Dharmasvamin have been carefully examined and used. The author correctly infers from these sources that the Muslim conquest by Bakhtiyar Khalji was partial; except for Bihar (later Bihar Sharif) and Maner the rest of the province, especially north of the Ganges, remained under the control of the local Hindu chieftains. Here we wish the author had also emphasized the fact that the early Khalji conquerors and their immediate successors, the Turk *walis* (governors) from Delhi, had subjugated the chiefs and then persuaded them to acquiesce to their authority even in the far-flung regions of Bihar and Bengal. They actually got local support through these Hindu chieftains to consolidate their authority in different regions of India. The fact that Bihar, and southern as well as northern and western Bengal, did not face any internal threat from chieftains in Bihar or in Bengal should not be forgotten.

The part relating to the administrative set-up in Bihar during the early Tughluq period provides the reader with fresh insights into the important changes that the provincial organization underwent. The references to various officers posted by Muhammad bin Tughluq with specified powers to carry on civil and executive administration in south Bihar have been made on the basis of *Ma'dan al-Ma'ani*, the first collection of the discourses of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri. Previously the *muqta'* or *wali* was solely incharge of the government in a provincial unit, and for his help he posted his own servants to carry on the administration in the sub-division, later called *pargana*. He enjoyed the larger part of the revenue from the province and transmitted the surplus, if any, to the royal exchequer. Ibn Battuta informs us, for the Tughluq period, that officers were appointed in the province for financial supervision and civil and military administration separately with specified powers. Ibn Battuta's description of the administrative set-up in the provincial unit of Amroha (modern Rohilkhand division in UP) provides us an insight into the bureaucratization of the system

during the Tughluq period. Now every *shiqq* (the province) had two supreme officers, one incharge of finance and the other responsible for the maintenance of peace and order. Each was paid one-tenth of the income from the province as his annual salary and allowances. The *Ma'dan al-Ma'ani* both supplements and corroborates Ibn Battuta in this regard. It provides us with clues about the posting of Majd ul-Mulk as the supreme military and executive officer of the unit of Bihar, whereas Khwaja Mahmud Awaz held the office of *mutassarif* (finance officer) there. Besides, there were a number of subordinate officers charged with administration at the lower level. Qazi Shamsuddin and Qazi Mu'inuddin were the officers-in-charge of Chausa (town) and Bihar (town) respectively. (p. 21)

Likewise, the section on life in the Bihar region brings fresh evidence to light. It is for perhaps the first time that the eye-witness account of the thirteenth-century Tibetan monk Dharmasvamin has been utilized on Bihar. Contemporary Indo-Persian writers never took notice of what had become a part of day-to-day life in India, but foreigners noticed much of it with amazement. Dharmasvamin was surprised to see how much indoctrinated the low-caste or untouchable Hindus had become owing to the Hindu caste system. Narrating an incident, he tells us he was refused a helping hand in the river by a low-caste person of dark complexion because he considered him a high-caste person who would be polluted. 'It was improper for a man of low caste,' states Dharmasvamin, 'to touch with his hands a person of high caste. If a person of low caste were to look at a person of high caste eating, the food had to be thrown away.' (p. 23)

Equally interesting is Dharmasvamin's statement about more than eighty *Buddhist Viharas* in and around Nalanda, where Buddhist teachers imparted knowledge to their followers. This piece of information is valuable as it dispels the erroneous view that Nalanda was destroyed by Muslim conquerors. This also calls for an investigation of the circumstances that led to the disappearance of Buddhism in Bihar subsequently. Did Buddhists become Muslims or were they absorbed into Hinduism?

Chapter II, on the birth, education and transformation of the Shaikh from an orthodox *'alim* (scholar) into a Sufi saint is equally good.

The authentic, as opposed to the popular, chronology worked

out by the author, showing that Shaikh Sharafuddin spent time as a student in Sonargaon under the guidance of his teacher Maulana Sharafuddin Tau'ma, is quite convincing. The Shaikh seems to have stayed there during the years 1305 to 1322. Likewise, the description of Sonargaon as a centre of Islamic learning and culture under the fostering care of Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah, though brief, casts interesting light on the process of urbanization as well as the role played by it in the consolidation of Muslim rule in eastern Bengal. The portrait of the enlightened Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz Shah has been drawn for the first time on the basis of authentic information available in the collection of the discourses of the Shaikh.

The legend connected with Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri's marriage to the daughter of his teacher, Maulana Tau'ama, is rejected as a latter-day fabrication. The girl whom the Shaikh took in Sonargaon as his wife and who gave birth to his son was a slave girl. It is, however, difficult to agree with the author when he accepts the statement of Shaikh Shu'aib Firdausi, the author of *Manaqib al-Asfiya*, about Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri's visit to Delhi during the lifetime of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (d. 1325). The author prefers *Manaqib al-Asfiya* to the *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, wherein Shaikh 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi states, on the basis of some earlier source, that Shaikh Maneri visited Delhi in search of a *pir* (religious preceptor) after Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya had passed away. According to Shaikh Shu'aib Firdausi, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was still alive and received Maneri respectfully, but refused to enrol him as his *murid*, saying he was not destined to train him. Abul Fazl, perhaps on the basis of *Manaqib al-Asfiya*, states that Maneri was directed by Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya to join the circle of Shaikh Najibuddin Firdausi's murids. These statements are not acceptable because Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya is reported to have accepted every sincere visitor as a murid. Ziyauddin Barani, a contemporary, writes:

> *Shaikh ul-Islam* Nizamuddin had thrown open the door (of his *khanqah*) to all and sundry. All were [allowed to enter] the circle of his *murids*. He granted the sinners *khirqa* (robe) and caused them to repent for their sins committed in the past and turn good. Everybody, no matter whether notable or ordinary, rich or poor, officer or commoner, scholar or illiterate, urbanized or rustic, nobleman or soldier, freeborn or slave, were all favoured with his discipleship.

(*Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, Calcutta: 1860, pp. 343–4).

It cannot be said that the *Tazkira Akhbar al-Akhyar* is totally free from legendary elements in the biographical details of Sufi saints, yet its compiler was most careful in drawing upon the Sufi literature available to him. Unlike him, other Sufi writers, both before and after, incorporated in their *tazkiras* (biographical works) whatever legends they found floating. Shaikh Shu'aib Firdausi seems to have written everything with a view to establishing the superiority of the Firdausi Sufi saints over the Chishtis. By this time (late fifteenth century) the relations between the followers of different *silsilas* (Sufi orders) had become strained owing to rivalry and moral decadence. The reminiscences of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri show that he cherished the pious memory of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya but also that he never met him. During his visit to Delhi, Shaikh Najibuddin Firdausi was left the only senior Sufi, whereas Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi, the spiritual successor of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, still needed time to gain popularity through austerity and devotion.

Part II begins with chapter three, relating the life and mission of the saint after his departure from Delhi to Bihar. Sincerely devoted to the cause of religion and aware of the importance of cosmic consciousness for man, Shaikh Sharafuddin took up as his mission the work of inculcating the divine temper in everyone who turned to him for religious guidance. He agreed to settle down in the khanqah built by the order of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and spent money, accruing from the land grant made by the state for him, on the poor. It should have been pointed out that the Firdausi saints differed from the early Chishti saints in their attitude towards the state. Unlike the Chishtis, they did not consider their contact with the sultan or the state as sinful. On Muhammad bin Tughluq's death, Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri returned the land grant to Firuz Shah, but he continued to show love and regard to the Sultan of Bengal. He was also favourably disposed towards Sultan Sikandar Shah of Bengal.

The Shaikh's own life of dedication to God and to the service of mankind were a source of inspiration to his followers. By way of illustration, Jackson quotes at length the conversation between Shaikh Sharafuddin and a certain itinerant dervish who happened to be present with him at the time of the opening ceremony of the newly-constructed khanqah in Bihar town:

This place and rank belong to you [the Shaikh said to the dervish]. Obedience to the reigning King had compelled me to accept it. This necessity had arisen because of the King's instructions to Malik Majd ul-Mulk. Whatever has come to me, including these things, is due to the blessings of the dervishes. I am not worthy of Islam, so how could I consider myself worthy of this prayer-carpet [sent by the Sultan]? The dervish replied: 'Master, nobody recognizes you because of your hospice or prayer-carpet. Whoever recognizes you does so through God's grace. We have all come here by virtue of your inner blessing, Islam will become widely known and thrive here.' (p. 76)

In discussing his way of imparting instructions to murids, the author observes: 'There is no attempt to manipulate people, to force them to agree with his opinions or to get them to do things they don't want to do. In modern jargon, he does not use any 'brain-washing' techniques, nor does he assume any of the postures of a whole specturm of religious leadership visible on the contemporary scene.' (p. 102)

Equally important for a student of history and culture is the section on the Shaikh's relations with contemporary kings, the sultans of Delhi and Sultan Sikandar Shah of Bengal. Being a rationalist, Muhammad bin Tughlak, admired criticism of his views and of his approach to political problems, provided they were based on reason. For instance, the Sultan studied the *Maktubat-i Sadi*, which contains the Shaikh's comments on his style of government and behaviour along with an exposition of the Islamic belief system, and of Sufism. Impressed by Shaikh Maneri's learning and personality, he requested the Shaikh to write a treatise on Sufi philosophy for his perusal. But the Shaikh did not agree, writing in reply:

> you, my brother, had desired that I should write something especially for you concerning the knowledge of the Sufis. Realize, my brother, that the knowledge of this group is extremely precious and exalted, and cannot be contained in letters and words. . . .'

The last sections of the chapter concern the Shaikh's attitude towards the observance of the Islamic canon law (*shar'*), to *sama'* (listening to Sufi songs), ecstatic utterances by Sufis, and past Sufi saints—particularly Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. Nothing is regarded as authentic evidence unless it stands the test of historical scrutiny. All the stories and tales fabricated by later generations are rejected. As for the analysis of the Shaikh's attitude towards the Hindus, the author describes him as modern in this respect—for he did not

think righteousness to be the quality of a Muslim alone. He appreciated the deep religious spirit possessed by Hindu recluses, even if he was critical of some of their doctrines and practices. (pp. 153–4).

The remaining three chapters present an illuminating analysis of the metaphysical philosophy and teachings of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri. Two appendices dealing with Firuz Shah's visit to Bihar (town) during the course of his military expeditions against Bengal and the death of the Shaikh, respectively, are also valuable parts of the work. The *wafat-nama* (account of death) demonstrates the fact that ordinary and unlettered people were also included among the disciples of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri. This is important because interaction between the great and little traditions of Islamic belief systems was possible through the association of such people with great Sufi saints.

Sufism in Indian History*

MUHAMMAD ISHAQ KHAN

Students of medieval Indian history are indebted to Professors Mohammad Habib, Syed Hasan Askari and particularly K. A. Nizami for giving due recognition to Sufism as an important branch of historical studies. In recent years some regional studies on Sufism have also seen the light of day. Among these Richard Maxwell Eaton's excellent study, *Sufis of Bijapur (1300–1700): Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), attracts attention, from the viewpoint of both methodology and objectivity.[1] Yohanan Friedman's important monograph *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, an Outline of his Thought and a Study of his Image in the Eyes of Posterity*. (Montreal-London: McGill Queen's Univ. Press, 1971), Bruce Lawrence's articles on mystic sources and conversions, and, above all, S. A. A. Rizvi's prolific writings on the Muslim revivalist movements in northern India, on Shah Waliullah and now on Sufism in India—all point to the growing interest of both Indian and Western scholars in research on the history of Sufism in India. Here I shall deal with some important themes in Rizvi's two-volume study, *A History of Sufism in India*.

The first volume covers the history of Sufism in India beginning from the thirteenth century and extends roughly down to the first quarter of the sixteenth century. During this period the Chishtiya, the Suhrawardiya, the Firdausiya and the Kubrawiya orders were active in different regions of India. While the author stresses the importance of these Sufi orders in exercising 'a deep social, political,

* Review article of *A History of Sufism in India*, 2 vols., by S. Athar Abbas Rizvi (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978–1983).

[1] For a critical assessment of this work, see Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'A New Look at Deccani Sufism', in *Islam in India*, ed. C. W. Troll (New Delhi: Vikas Publ. House, 1985), pp. 237–49.

economic and cultural influence in India' through their *khanqahs*, he takes at the same time pains to describe at some length the history of *qalandars* and 'legendary and semi-legendary saints'. Although the fifteenth century was characterized by the activities of the Shattariya and the Qadiriya orders in India, Rizvi does not describe their role in Volume One. They are discussed in Volume Two.

In the first chapter of Volume One Rizvi describes the general history of Sufism. Sufism, as he rightly points out, is not a 'rigid system' but, according 'to one oustanding Sufi, the paths by which its followers seek God: "are in number as the souls of men". Asceticism, purification, love and gnosis assist Sufis in finding the Universal Self. These are merely the means to an end, and not the end itself.' After describing the life of poverty and resignation to God's will (*faqr*) of the Prophet Muhammad as a source of Sufism, Rizvi refers to some of his companions who spent time in incessant prayer and fasting after their leader's example. Such men, known as the *ahl al-suffa* or *ashab-i suffa* (the people of the verandah), continued to practise faqr even after the demise of the Prophet, when other companions of the Prophet (not named by Rizvi) amassed huge fortunes. It was against the evils of material prosperity, contends the author, that a companion of the Prophet Abu Dharr al-Ghifari 'immersed in poverty and asceticism' raised his voice during the caliphate of 'Uthman (644–56). The author then traces the history of Shias and writes about their 'determined . . . opposition to the Umayyad Caliphs'. The 'Abbasids (750–1258) are described as the 'inveterate enemies of the Shias'. An account of the Shia–Sunni differences, the development of the Mu'tazilites, the Asha'rites, etc. follows in a descriptive fashion. Even the specialist in the field, let alone an average reader interested in Sufism, is lost in the ocean of disjointed facts. The account of about forty Sufis who flourished from the seventh to the tenth century of the Christian era is mainly based on the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and the works of Western scholars.

One would have expected Rizvi to give a systematic and coherent account of the development of mystical ideals in Islam; however, by treading the beaten path while describing the mystical stages of individual Sufis, Rizvi only overburdens the narrative with innumerable repetitions. The mind of the reader is further cluttered with an extensive literature on the Sufis which Rizvi describes at length. In the same chapter, the life-story of some prominent Sufis and

their poetry are described profusely without any attempt at generalization. The history of the development of various Sufi orders is traced in a perfunctory manner. This important development, which has so brilliantly been anlaysed by Spencer Trimingham in *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), has received shabby treatment at the hands of Rizvi. Sufism, according to Trimingham, passed through three distinct stages, namely the *khanqah*, the *tariqa* and the *ta'ifa* in its organizational aspect. Notwithstanding the limitations of such a general view, Trimingham's analysis enables us to understand the history of Sufism in clearer terms than those applied by Rizvi. For the latter, the key to the understanding of Sufism is *wahdat al-wujud* and *wahdat al-shuhud*. As a matter of fact Rizvi does not allow himself to rise above the limited vision which a limited understanding of these concepts is likely to produce in a scholar seeking to study Sufism 'as psycho-historical phenomenon'. Seen from a strictly Sufi viewpoint, both wahdat al-wujud and wahdat al-shuhud merely reflect the transitory inner condition of the mystical soul; hence an historian attempting to explain Sufism as a 'psycho-historical phenomenon' can seldom do justice to his subject when he makes mystical experiences absolute catagories of analysis. A mystic experience is, after all, subjective and 'invisible'. To explain it in rational or historical terms is inadequate.

The concept of wahdat al-wujud was not originally devised by Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240) but, in fact, was popularized by the great Spanish Sufi through his brilliant discussion, while attempting to reconcile and re-orient different viewpoints of Sufis on the nature of Reality in such a manner as to form the sheet-anchor of all latter-day Sufi thought. The view that wahdat al-wujud 'was a form of pantheism' no longer holds good. Louis Massignon described it in terms of 'existential monism'. While A.E. Affifi, too, did not wholly subscribe to the view that it was pantheism, he, all the same, called it 'Islamic pantheism'. But Titus Burckhardt totally rejected the view equating wahdat al-wujud with pantheism. Another authority on Ibn 'Arabi, Henry Corbin, has expressed strong disapproval at characterizing Ibn 'Arabi a monist.[2] While Rizvi approvingly quotes

[2] See his *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969).

Corbin, he does not test the validity of the latter's argument, which casts wahdat al-wujud into the Isma'ilian mould.

Notwithstanding the contributions of Corbin towards promoting our understanding of Shia spirituality, the fact remains that his expositions on many issues concerning Sufism are hardly convincing. One of his chief limitations has been his preoccupation with describing Sufism as a peculiarly Iranian exemplification of the Islamic phenomenon. For Corbin, Islam is not only 'something different' but, Charles Adams remarks, 'also something more important, more true, and more real' on Iranian soil.[3] One would not have expected Corbin to show utter disregard for historical facts; for him both Sufi and Shia consciousness derive from the first Imam, meaning thereby that their derivation is a common ideational ethos. While Corbin is not oblivious of the fact that Sufism is the spiritual tradition of Islam, paradoxically enough he considers the esoteric branch of Shiism the only area worthy of exploration for determining Sufi religiosity. It is a matter of common knowledge that although Sufism and Shiism grew out of a common religious environment, they nonetheless did come to be recognized as distinctive trends in Islamic history. Had Corbin emphasized the historical development of Islam and its multiple modes of expression rather than loyalty to the Imams' teachings as 'true' Sufism, he would have provided an objective interpretation of Sufism. What, however, invalidates Corbin's thesis is his excessive addiction to tracing a distinctively 'Iranian set of themes through both their pre-Islamic and Islamic manifestations down to our time.'[4]

Although Rizvi takes the clue from Corbin, he lacks the profundity of thought that characterizes the celebrated French scholar's works on Islam. Corbin's thought centres around three key concepts in Sufism: (1) adherence to the *wilayat*, or sainthood, which Corbin contends is rooted in Shiaism; (2) the emphasis of gnosis in Sufism which he equates with the Shia theosophy; and (3) the Sufis' proneness to describe reality in terms of *zahir* and *batin*, between *shari'a* (law) and *haqiqa* (mystical truths), which, he stresses, is in keeping with the best traditions of the esoteric branch of Shiaism. Rizvi's approach, on the other hand, is deter-

[3] 'The Hermeneutics of Henry Corbin', *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tuscon: the Univ. of Arizona Press, 1985), p. 135.

[4] Ibid.

mined by his interests which, we may venture to suggest, have remained throughout chiefly that of a Shia theologian and not that of a historian or, for that matter, even that of a serious student of comparative religion. The fact that Rizvi's mind is obsessed with Shia–Sunni polemics in India explains why he has failed to give a comprehensive, systematic and disinterested presentation of either Sufism, or even the historical manifestations of Islam in the various regions of the subcontinent.

In the second chapter the author gives a lengthy account of the Sufis of the Chishtiya order in India, particularly, Mu'inuddin Chishti, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Hamid Nagauri, Baba Farid, Nizamuddin Auliya and their spiritual descendants. Rizvi takes great pleasure in giving factual details regarding the life and teachings of the Chishtis. As compared to K. A. Nizami's scholarly analysis of the contribution of the Chishtis in the *Tarikh-i Masha'ikh-i Chisht* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat, 1980), *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid ud-Din Ganj-i Shakar* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat, 1973) and *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century* (Bombay: Asia Publ. House, 1961), Rizvi's description is trivial.

The third chapter is related to the Suhrawardiya and Firdausiya orders. The material concerning the Suhrawardiya, already utilized by K. A. Nizami in *Medieval India Quarterly* (1957), has been presented in a new form. Instead of examining the attitude of the Suhrawardiya towards the state in chapter three, Rizvi devotes a good deal of space to rehashing well-known details on the attitude of Chishtis towards the state.

The title of the fourth chapter 'The Chishtiya, Suhrawardiya and Kubrawiya Centres from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century', is elusive. Here the author presents minute biographical details on Sufis who lived in Delhi, Bengal, Rudauli (about 100 kilometres east of Lucknow), Lucknow, Kalpi and Iraj, Malwa, Uch, Gujarat, Kanauj and Kashmir. One misses a discussion of the organizational aspect of the khanqah life in the newly developing centres of Sufi activities, and also of its impact on contemporary society. An integrated picture of the development of Sufi thought in medieval India does not emerge.

Rizvi's explanation of Shaikh 'Ala'uddaula Simnani's (1261–1336) opposition to Ibn 'Arabi's *wujudi* ideas is far from convincing and full of contradictions. Here again the argument is cast in the Shia

mould that 'the broad compatibility of Ibn al-'Arabi's philosophy with Shi'i beliefs was a great challenge to Sunnism . . .' (p. 250). It is surprising to find Rizvi writing simultaneously on the acceptance of the wahdat al-wujud by some of Simnani's leading disciples. They are said to have written commentaries on *Fusus al-Hikam* of Ibn 'Arabi. One is also struck by the author's assertion: 'The most enthusiastic convert to 'Ala'uddaula Simnani's ideology in India was Saiyid Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Husaini, popularly known as Gesudaraz . . .' (pp. 250–1). No historical evidence is cited to substantiate the point. On the other hand Rizvi's brief summary of the works of Gesudaraz casually portrays the Chishti saint in conflict with Ibn 'Arabi in regard to the implications of the Divine Being, the concept of sainthood, the Day of Resurrection, and Paradise.

A twelve-page account of the Sufis of Kashmir, given in the fourth chapter, deserves careful examination in view of the author's misinterpretations. Curiously enough, he attributes the conversion of 'many Kashmiris' in the fourteenth century to 'temple demolition' and the force used by the followers of Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani (d. 1385). Notwithstanding the fact that Sayyid 'Ali was also imbued with the missionary zeal of 'Ala'uddaula Simnani (d. 1336), it is doubtful that the Mir was able to Islamize Kashmir during his brief sojourn in the valley. As a matter of fact the missionary activities of Sayyid 'Ali and his son, Mir Muhammad Hamadani, were eclipsed by the emergence of the Rishi order of the Kashmiri mystics founded by Nuruddin Rishi. As I have discussed this question at some length elsewhere,[5] it will here suffice to say that Sufism in Kashmir evolved a distinctive pattern of its own due to the assimilation of the Kubrawiya and Suhrawardiya orders in the *silsila* of the Rishis. Thus Rizvi's contention regarding 'the enforced conversion of many Kashmiris' at the hands of the Kubrawi Sufis is unfounded.

It is also important to note here that Rizvi, in his passion to prove the anti-Hindu attitude of Kubrawi Sufis, has recourse to quoting long passages from *Dhakirat al-Muluk* of Sayyid 'Ali. As a matter

[5] 'Islam in Kashmir: Historical Analysis of its Distinctive Features,' *Islam in India*, vol. 2, ed. Christian W. Troll (New Delhi: Vikas Publ. House, 1985). See also 'The Impact of Islam on Kashmir in the Sultanate Period, 1320–1586', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Delhi School of Economics (May, 1986).

of fact, Sayyid 'Ali's discussion on the position of non-Muslims in a Muslim state is of purely theoretical value and in no way reflects his actual attitude towards them. One has to grasp the two-dimensional personality of Sayyid 'Ali. As a scholar, he stands for according such treatment to the *dhimmis*, as was suggested by the jurists of the Shafi'i school. But the theory loses its ground when we examine the realistic attitude of a Sufi in the person of Sayyid 'Ali towards the non-Muslims which was actually conditioned by historical circumstances. In this regard, two letters of Sayyid 'Ali addressed to Sultan Qutbuddin (1373–89) and written in the wake of his departure from Kashmir, deserve special mention. These letters are preserved in the Research Library, Srinagar, but have so far escaped the notice of historians. In the first letter the Sayyid reveals himself as a humble man who had deep respect for a true Brahman:

گر برہمن حال من بیند بر اندازد درم
زانکہ چوں من بدکنش را پیش بت ہم بار نیست

(If the Brahman peeps into my (inner) condition, he will turn me out of his sight,
Since a wrong-doer like me cannot be permitted to present himself before the idol.)

In the second letter Sayyid 'Ali enjoins the Sultan to make efforts to popularize the Sharia, but (only) within limits (*ghayat al-imkan sa'i numa'id*). Notwithstanding his Sharia-mindedness, neither letter gives even the faintest hint that Sayyid 'Ali wanted the Sultan to be unfriendly towards the great majority of his non-Muslim subjects. On the other hand the sultan was advised to render equitable justice to the privileged (*khwass*) and the common man (*'amm*). For him, all subjects of the sultan were the children of God; hence it was obligatory for the sultan to protect the rights of the weak against the strong.

The most glaring naivety underlying Rizvi's assumptions is his emphasis 'on the uprooting of infidelity from Kashmir' as the chief mission of the Kubrawi Sufis. Unfortunately, such an assertion is mainly based on an uncritical acceptance of the sources referred to by him. The author actually accepts the statement of chroniclers

on their face value; in contrast, our analysis of the source material yields two points: first, Sayyid 'Ali's and his son's concern for the supremacy of the Sharia in Kashmir should not be equated with religious bigotry or fanaticism. Even the 'liberal mystics'—to use the term coined by Rizvi—were Sharia-minded in their precepts and acts. Secondly, the Kubrawi Sufis, although missionaries to the core, were wise enough to grasp the essential elements of popular Kashmiri religious culture and ethos, and creatively gave expression to these in adapted forms of Kashmiri Muslim life and worship.[6] Thus, Islam developed a resilient tradition of its own in Kashmir, fostered initially under the guidance of Kubrawi Sufis, and later under Nuruddin Rishi and a host of his Rishi followers.

The fifth chapter, 'The Qalandars, the Martyrs and the Legendary and Semi-legendary Saints', is mostly based on legends. No attempt has been made to bring historical realism and 'legends' into an effective relationship. As a matter of fact Indian historians on Sufism have either rejected legendary evidence without critical examination, or based their accounts on an uncritical acceptance of legends. What is of relevance here is that legends, which are the lungs of popular mystic culture, need to be examined in relation to history as an indistinguishable aspect of one whole experience. In fact, history can be rendered meaningful through a judicious use of 'legends'.[7]

The sixth chapter, 'The Interaction between Medieval Hindu Mystic Traditions and Sufism', is very well written, though one cannot fail to notice that Rizvi has not made any substantial improvement on Tara Chand's monumental work, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Allahabad: Indian Press, 1963). The attempts of both Tara Chand and Rizvi towards promoting national cohesiveness through their emphasis on the synthesis of Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim ideas in the medieval period are laudable. It needs to be stressed, however, that writing on such a complex subject as Sufism *vis-à-vis* Hindu mysticism needs extreme care and sensitivity rather than the mere pursuance of nationalist goals in historiography. There are, of course, striking parallels between Sufism and Hindu mysticism; but it would be equally important

[6] For details, see 'Islam in Kashmir'.

[7] See on this issue my future work, 'The Regional Dimension of Islam in India: The Rishis of Kashmir and their influence on Contemporary Society'.

to take note of some significant developments that took place in the history of Sufism in India. Thus, at the dawn of Sufism in northern India, al-Hujwiri (d. *c.* 1071) attempted to resolve the creative tension between 'orthodoxy' and Sufism in his authoritative work *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Most other leading Sufis of the subcontinent, in spite of their popularity among the Hindus, emphasized strict adherence to the Sharia and thus dispelled some doubts that existed about the polarity between religious law and Sufism. Even Nuruddin Rishi, the Kashmiri apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity, visualized the danger of Islam being swamped by syncretism. Hence, in a number of popular Kashmiri verses he took special care to urge people to observe the tenets of the Sharia. This development should not be misconstrued as revivalism but, as we shall see later, an attempt at bringing Sufism in conformity with the Quran and the Sunna which have, unmistakably, remained the original sources of all Sufi thought.

Many of Rizvi's statements are not only misleading but also based on misconceptions. For instance, he gives tacit approval to the view that the Bhakti reformer Kabir (probably late fifteenth century), 'like an Uwaisi Sufi', was 'mystically initiated by God'. A superficial observer may accept this analogy as valid, but a serious student of Sufism would find it difficult to reconcile himself to Rizvi's use of the term 'Uwaisi'. We would not have objected to Rizvi's reasonings, had Kabir, like some Sufis, used Uwais in legitimizing his own position and point of view. The existence of the Uwais in Sufi literature—which furnishes an additional significant datum for understanding a much more profound esoteric dimension of Islam—has always signified spiritual knowledge directly obtained from the spirit of Prophet Muhammad. Rizvi's analogies are bound to distort our vision of both Sufism and the Bhakti movement. These two parallel movements in medieval India, when studied in depth, point to conclusions that differ from those attempted in Tara Chand's and Rizvi's works. It is in this context, therefore, that I would venture to suggest the need for examining the indelible impact of Bhakti reformers in inculcating Hindu beliefs and practices among lower sections of Hindu society. The purpose is not to suggest that the Bhakti movement emerged as a challenge to Islam in India. Rather, it is to point out the contribution of Bhakti reformers within the sphere of their religious communities.

Rizvi betrays a poor understanding of Arabic. This has not only resulted in the misinterpretation of some key concepts, but also in drawing wrong conclusions. His interpretation of the terms *tauhid* and *muwahhid* is misconceived. Muwahhid, according to him, signifies a believer in wahdat al-wujud, although it needs no stressing that the term in its strictest sense simply means a follower of tauhid, i.e. belief in one God. As a matter of fact, the adherents of the Ahl-i Hadith movement in India have always styled themselves muwahhid and have, indeed, been very critical of wahdat al-wujud. Rizvi also takes his readers by surprise when he describes *ummi* as 'illiterate but when referring to Muhammad it means a lack of knowledge of the religious scriptures.' (p. 384, fn. 2)

From the viewpoint of history, Rizvi's contentions are unacceptable. One looks in vain for documentary evidence for his statement that Mu'inuddin Chishti's 'simple, ascetic life was an inspiration to both the Turkic *ghazis* . . . and to the Hindus who were forcibly converted to Islam.' (p. 123). His remarks on Firuz Shah Tughluq are worth quoting here. 'In the name of Islam and at the instigation of the '*ulama*' the list of men this pious Sultan had killed was no shorter than that of Muhammad bin Tughluq who had had victims liquidated for political reasons . . .' (p. 242). No contemporary or later chronicler depicted Firuz Shah in such lurid terms.

The second volume covers the history of the life and teachings of prominent Sufis and their disciples from the sixteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. In the introduction the author enumerates the source material. The first chapter contains a brief summary of the views of Ibn 'Arabi's mystical ideas, which is mostly based on the researches of A.E. Affifi, T. Izutsu and Henry Corbin. Although Rizvi lucidly explains the ontological world-view of Ibn 'Arabi, he does not care to examine the deeper implications of some of Ibn 'Arabi's statements. For instance, Ibn 'Arabi's view that the universe is the form of Allah, and man is in the two forms, needs to be explained in terms of his concern for maintaining the inner balance between sharia and haqiqa. Such an analysis also calls for studying his concept of good and evil in its proper context. To say that for Ibn 'Arabi the universe is entirely good is absurd; in fact, for such a Sharia-conscious Sufi, the universe appeared from Allah who, notwithstanding His encompassing Merciful nature, hates as well as loves. It is in the Quranic context that Ibn 'Arabi explains, in *Fusus al-Hikam*, that the Prophet as the first

'self-determination of the Absolute' and 'the most perfect being of the human species' loved only the good (the perfume) of everything, and there is nothing more to it. Ibn 'Arabi strongly holds that 'there is not a disposition in the universe which only finds good in everything and does not recognize the bad.'[8]

In the second chapter Rizvi discusses the history of the Qadiriya order in India. Founded by Shaikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1166), the Qadiriya order is one of the oldest of all Sufi orders. In India, however, it was introduced only towards the end of the fourteenth century, and in the subsequent centuries it gained such popularity that it brought under its influence important regions like the Deccan, Sindh, the Panjab, Kashmir, Gujarat, Malwa, Delhi, Agra, etc. Rizvi's chapter comprises ninety-six pages and is so peculiarly planned that, while describing the history of a number of Qadiri Sufis and their disciples in India, the author mixes up fact with legend without any attempt at a critical evaluation. It would be more correct to say that in the second chapter Rizvi gives a biographical dictionary of innumerable adherents of the Qadiriya order rather than any systematic exposition of the influence of Ibn 'Arabi's philosophy on Indian Sufis, as claimed by him.

In the third chapter the author discusses at length the history of the growth of the Naqshbandi order. Not only Babur but a considerable number of his Central Asian soldiers were spiritually inclined to Khwaja 'Ubaidullah Ahrar (1404–90), the most prominent successor of Khwaja Baha'uddin Naqshband's (1318–89) disciple, Yaqub Charkhi (d. 1434/5). Among the notable Naqshbandi Sufis who came to India from Central Asia were Khwaja 'Abdushshahid and Khwaja Kalan, a descendant of Khwaja 'Ubaidullah Ahrar, who was held in high esteem by Babur.

Although in the early years of Akbar's reign many immigrant Naqshbandis manned high posts in the civil and military administration and generally lent support to Akbar's liberal policies introduced after 1579, some of them opposed the emperor's religious policy. The leading figure in the opposition was Khwaja 'Ubaid Kabuli who was banished to Thatta on the ground of his involvement in a religious dispute. Kabuli had remained loyal to Mirza Hakim, Akbar's half-brother.

[8] *Fusus al-Hikam*, Engl. Trans. *The Seals of Wisdom* by Aisha Abd al-Rahman [Norwich: Diwan Press, 1980), p. 200.

Rizvi also discusses the influence of Khwaja Khawand Mahmud Naqshbandi 'Alawi Husaini on Kashmir. Srinagar is said to have become a nucleus of Naqshbandiya activities under him. The Khwaja initiated a sizeable number of top-ranking Mughal nobles, including Mirza 'Aziz Koka, and noted ladies of the harem such as Sultan Salima Begum and Gulrukh Begum. Akbar also craved his blessings, though these were refused to the rebel prince Khusrau on the ground 'that he prayed only for him who was fighting for a right cause and pious motives.' Even Jahangir, during his visit to the valley in 1620, showed keen interest 'in the Khwaja's mission as the Naqshbandiyya leader.' Khwaja Mu'inuddin, the fourth son of the Khwaja, continued the mission of his father after he was exiled to Lahore by Shahjahan for his 'involvement in puritanical Sunni revivalist activities'. During the reign of Aurangzeb, however, he remained a 'significant figure'.

The opposition of the Naqshbandis to Shiite ideas and beliefs was in my view based on academic grounds rather than on the supposed ingrained hostility of the Sunnis to the Shias. Also, Rizvi repeatedly uses terms like 'Sunnis' as a synonym for 'Puritans', 'Revivalists' and the like in order to show how 'deeply involved' they were 'in a struggle against the Shi'i minority.' (p. 184). That Rizvi implicates even 'the Sunnis of Kashmir' in such a 'struggle', under the influence of their Naqshbandi leaders, shows not only his ignorance of Kashmir history but, more importantly, the tendentious nature of his writings. As a matter of fact it was the Rishi rather than the Naqshbandi movement that left an indelible mark on the Kashmiri mind in the Mughal period. Even a hitherto unutilized Naqshbandi source (Muhammad Murad Teng, *Tuhfat al-Fuqara*) speaks of the Rishis in glowing terms in respect of their role in Kashmiri society. It would be no digression to observe here that under the influence of the Rishis even the attitude of the so-called enemies of the Shias, the Suhrawardis, softened, if not completely changed. Thus Baba Da'ud Khaki, notorious for his hostility to the Shias (p. 70), reveals himself as a tolerant 'Sunni' when in his *Qasida-i Ghusliya Yusuf Shahi* he extols Sultan Yusuf Shah Chak, the Shia ruler of Kashmir, to the skies. This lesser known tract of the distinguished Suhrawardi Sufi was composed during the period when, according to chroniclers and modern historians, the Shia-Sunni conflicts in Kashmir had taken a serious turn owing to the ascendancy of the Chak rulers (1555–86).

Rizvi's views about the role of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, expressed by him in the *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India* (1965), have found a powerful echo in the volume under review. However much Rizvi may continue to hold Sirhindi responsible for administering the poison of communalism to the Indian Muslims, the essential point he fails to take note of in his analysis is the reformist zeal of Muslim religious leaders which, in most cases, stems more from the atrophy of social solidarity of their community than from communal considerations. What actually bestirred a Muslim reformer like Sirhindi into action were the innovations (*bida'*) which, from the standpoint of the Law, were bound to undermine the social solidarity of the community. Thus Sirhindi primarily voiced his concern against the syncretistic practices of Indian Muslims, and not against Hindus.

The reform movement of Sirhindi needs to be comprehended on its own terms rather than through Rizvi's misconceived and misapplied notions. In the context of Sirhindi's attack on the aberrations and misconceptions of Sufism, we need to discern his attempt at easing the tension between Sharia and the mystical experience. Two parallel trends in contemporary Indian Muslim society would seem to invalidate the thesis that tends to create an aura of separatist political ideology round Sirhindi's personality. First, the Ahl-i Hadith movement in India—essentially reformist in character—has looked to Waliullah and Sirhindi rather than to Muhammal 'Abdul Wahhab (1703–87) of Nejd for inspiration in its struggle to purify Islam in India of its accretions. Second, among considerable number of Indian Muslims who have a firm faith in the spirituality of the Sufis and the efficacy of shrines, Sirhindi stands out prominently as a Sufi *par excellence* who emphasized the importance of following sharia, tariqa and haqiqa that underline Islam as an integrated way of life.

Chapters five and six, namely 'The Chishtiyya' and 'Indian Sufis and the Medieval Islamic World' are informative but uncritical regarding the examination of the source material used. In chapter seven, 'The Sufi Conception of Kingship and Government', the author makes no attempt at giving an integrated and objective interpretation of the data collected. The entire chapter has been reduced to a collection of incoherent details. At the end, however, Shah Waliullah's purpose of restoring 'Sunni dominance over the world' emerges as a final conclusion to the disjointed facts. What is more intriguing is that the author refers extensively to Ziauddin

Barani's works, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* and *Fatawa-i Jahandari*, and presents his views on kingship and government in a most cavalier fashion, as those of a 'Sufi' rather than of a medieval historian with an acute sense of class consciousness. Considerable attention has also been given to Ghazali (d. 1111), Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani (d. 1385) and some other writers of different periods in Islamic history, without any thought for either theme or chronology. The author comes to the point only when he writes about 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith, Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah. But here again he returns to his favourite terminology, slotting Sharia consciousness of Sufi scholars into the pigeonholes of 'orthodox Sunni revivalism' and 'puritanism'. Rizvi's constant harping on such terms is done in order to perpetuate the myth of the hostility of 'Sunni Islam' towards Hindus and Shias. Rizvi's assertion is based on slender and stray evidence. In fact the writings of Sirhindi and Waliullah are marked by breadth of mystic vision and outlook rather than inbred hostility towards Shias and Hindus.

Chapter Eight, 'The Sufi Response to Hinduism', as the title indicates, should have formed a significant part of the volume, but does not. Rizvi is even narrower in his understanding of the 'Sunni Islam' of Sirhindi than the latter was in his understanding of Hinduism. Even a Sufi like Mirza Mazhar Janjanan (1699–1781), who had a better perception of Hinduism than Sirhindi, has been treated casually. Much of the quoted material regarding Sirhindi's and Janjanan's attitude towards Hinduism has not been examined in its proper historical setting. The author's efforts at making a case against Sirhindi and the followers of his line (*shuhudi*) have well exceeded his powers. Thus, even after quoting long passages from *Maqamat-i Mazhari* which show the relatively dignified attitude of Janjanan towards Hindus and their faith, Rizvi comes to an abrupt conclusion: 'Although his [Janjanan's] approach to Rama and Krishna was better informed than that of the Mujaddid, nevertheless he was unable to sympathize with those Hindus who doggedly continued to follow their own abrogated Hinduism after the advent of Islam.' (p. 403)

It seems important to point out here that some *maktubat* of Sirhindi, though derogatory to the Hindus, do not actually betray his prejudices against the Hindus but reveal the state of mind of a Sufi scholar whose thought was exposed to the hazards consequent upon Akbar's failure to take into account the religious susceptibili-

ties of Muslims. It is also against this background that we should try to understand the exaggerated overtones of the Mujaddidin school. By all accounts, Akbar's reign was a period of crisis for the Indian ulama; while Akbar succeeded admirably in securing the loyalty of his non-Muslim subjects, his indulgence in religious matters pertaining to Islam made him unpopular among the ulama. Thus Mulla 'Abdul Qadir Bada'uni does not seem to be wholly unreasonable in his accusations when his *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* is studied in conjunction with the *Maktubat* of Sirhindi. Although it is difficult to agree with Sirhindi and Bada'uni that Islam was enfeebled in Akbar's time, the main point that emerges, all the same, is that the Indian ulama felt a great challenge posed to Islam as a result of Akbar's dabblings in religion.

The letters of Sirhindi reveal the scant respect that was paid to the Sharia by a Muslim ruler. However, his views about Hindus, as reflected in the letters, merely show his state of mind, which was conditioned more by his context than 'the development of his ideas on the matter.' (Friedmann, p. 2). It would thus be unfair to distort the Sharia consciousness of Sirhindi by projecting into it the so-called innate irrational prejudices of Shuhudis against Hindus. Significantly, Sirhindi's Hindu contemporaries seem to have had a better perception of his role than do modern scholars. Thus, Shaikh Badi'uddin Saharanpuri, who visited Gosain Jadrup, the most celebrated of the Hindu yogis during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, tells us that even the yogi acknowledged the spiritual greatness of Sirhindi in a conversation with him. But when asked why he did not enter the discipleship of Sirhindi, Gosain retorted that a perfect yogi like himself barely needed anybody's advice in spiritual matters.[9]

Rizvi's views about the Sufi attitude to proselytization repeat the views expressed in Volume One. It will here suffice to say that his view that Sufis played an important part in the proselytizing process is only characterized by sketchy historical judgements. While it is not difficult to trace the itineraries of Sufis in the source materials, there is no way of knowing what percentage of the population the Sufis reached effectively. Notwithstanding certain cases of individual conversions in the real sense, it is wrong to argue that the 'supernatural powers' of the Sufis made a 'tremendous

[9] *Hazarat al-Qudus*, II, p. 287, quoted in Rizvi, pp. 410–11.

impact' on Hindus. And there is no reason to suppose that all the regions under Sufi influence converted to Islam at the same rate. As a matter of fact, since such regions were inhabited by people with varying religious beliefs, linguistic, cultural and social identities, it would be more reasonable to suggest the opposite. Thus, for instance, Kashmir's response to Sufi penetration was radically different from that of the other regions of the subcontinent. Here the indigenous mystic movement of the Hindu converts to Islam, known as the Rishi movement, arose not only as a reaction against the manifold abuses or the caste-ridden Brahmanic society but also as an offspring of the teachings of a Shaivite yogini Lal Ded, and the Kubrawi Sufi Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani. It has been explained elsewhere that under the influence of Lal Ded and Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani the Rishis played a significant role in inspiring the local people to a more personal, ecstatic approach to divine love within the ambit of Quran, Sharia and, of course, local practices.[10] In contrast to the indelible influence of the Rishis on the formation of Kashmiri society and culture, the influence of the Shattariya, on the population inhabiting outlying regions of rural Bihar and interior Gujarat, was infinitesimal.

Chapter Nine, 'Sufi Poets of the Regional Languages of the Subcontinent', calls for no comment since it is mostly based on secondary sources. This is followed by a brief conclusion, where a commitment to Shia theology rather than to Sufism or history is obvious.

CONCLUSION

It seems pertinent to ask whether it is correct to study Sufism against the background of Rizvi's oversimplified convictions about wujudi and shuhudi experiences. Notwithstanding the importance of these terms in conceptualizing Sufism, they merely represent one aspect of the mystic condition as a whole. Sufism would become more intelligible to us if we would realize that Sufis have always respected the axiom that strict adherence to tauhid and sharia alone can reveal mystical truth (haqiqa). If in following such a way the Sufis have had certain inward experiences, these were subjective

[10] 'Islam in Kashmir'.

experiences; none of these can be described in absolute terms or as having universal validity. The conflict arose when Sufis revealed their unique mystical experiences under the spell of the experience or, alternatively, expounded these with sobriety (*sahw*). Ibn Mansur Hallaj (d. 922), in spite of his revelations of the great mysteries of divine love and union, evoked a spirited defence even from Sharia-conscious Sufis. Even Nuruddin Rishi, the Kashmiri troubadour of love, touched upon the theme of *Ana al-Haqq* in his mystical poetry. Thus he remarks:

> Who says that my path is different from that of Mansur?
> He and myself pursued the same goal.
> Mansur slipped in saying—'I';
> [But] blessed was he when 'I' became grace.

It follows that mystical experiences are real experiences; but it should also be remembered that genuine experiences ultimately assume the nature of mere notional experiences even to Sufis who are never forgetful of the supreme importance of *tauhid* in their chief preoccupation with the equation tauhid shara' haqiqa. Viewed against this background, wahdat al-wujud and wahdat al-shuhud would cease to be abused and cease appearing in contexts where they do not belong.

Some Recent Studies in Muslim Religious Thought*

SYED VAHIDUDDIN

Sufism has, particularly of late, evoked great interest in the West; it is no wonder then that non-Muslim Indians should also feel drawn to it. It is to the credit of Muslim scholarship of the past that no less a person than Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. 1048) should have thought it worthwhile to study Indian wisdom in general and to have written a book valuable even today. Not enough attention has been paid in India to the Islamic heritage, though Islam has contributed much to the development of our composite culture. R.S. Bhatnagar thus deserves to be congratulated for presenting, in his *Dimensions of Classical Sufi Thought*, a comprehensive account.

The orientalists who first attempted a survey of Sufism insisted on its foreign inspiration and traced its development to neo-Platonism, Christian monasticism, Vedantic speculation, Iranian infiltrations, etc. In most appraisals of Sufism it is difficult to steer between extremes. But, thanks to the efforts of some of the most distinguished students of Sufism in the West, the Quranic vision as the mainspring of Sufi thought is now recognized. Bhatnagar's account is, however, not entirely free from the older bias. He occasionally refers to neo-Platonism and to other non-Islamic influences in the formulation of Sufi thought and experience. It is a mistake to

*This article reviews the following four publications in this sequence: (i) R.S. Bhatnagar, *Dimensions of Classical Sufi Thought* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1984), p. 241; (ii) I.H. Azad Faruqi, *Sufism and Bhakti: Mawlana Rumi and Sri Ramakrishna* (Delhi: Abhinav Publ., 1984), p. 178; (iii) Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Sharia: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986),

consider Sufism a revolt against orthodoxy because the concept of 'orthodoxy' in the Islamic context cannot be defined with any precision. We find even the ultra-orthodox drawn to Sufism, as was the case with Ibn Taimiyya, the outstanding critic of Sufism. He was, however, only protesting against *some* of the Sufi practices that developed later, and wrote a commentary on some portions of al-Jilani's *Futuh at-Ghayb*. In this respect Bhatnagar does not take enough care, for he makes statements which cannot be confirmed. This is specially true of his references to the development of Sufi perspectives through the impact of alien sources. He writes about al-Ghazali (d. 1111), for example:

> Ghazali developed his mystical system under the influence of Neoplatonism, Christian asceticism and certain mystical views of the early Muslim Saints. From Plotinus he learnt the concept of one God (without otherness) as the sole cause of everything. His theory of emanations was also accepted and developed by Ghazali. The views of the Christian mystics in relation to purgative life and gnosis had a great impact on Ghazali's mysticism. (p. 79)

He has also failed to take note of some important figures and movements of the classical period. While he justly gives enough space to Muhammad Ghazali, he does not take note of his younger brother Ahmad Ghazali who was no less a Sufi and the author of an important work on mystic love. The controversy that raged about the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* and its counterpart *wahdat al-shuhud* from the days of 'Ala'uddaula Simnani (d. 1336) to Sirhindi (d. 1624) is left unnoticed. Most of the Sufis when they said *hama ust*, often meant *hama az ust*: not that everything is God, but that everything is from God. In other words, they were not the exponents of undiluted pantheism but of what is called pan-entheism. It is here also important to avoid misunderstanding, as their so-called pantheism was also very unlike that of Spinoza (1632–77).

Apart from this seeming incompleteness there are some serious factual inaccuracies in Bhatnagar's work. It is erroneous to attribute to the Naqshbandiya 'worship' of the Shaikh. Worship, in any sense, is anathema in Islam. What they emphasized was concentration on the image of *murshid* for guidance: this was no more than an

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p. 368; (iv) J. M. S. Baljon, *Religion And Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi 1703–1762* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), p. 221.

excessive devotion to the Shaikh and compliance with his injunctions. Even more surprising is the statement that the followers of the Chishtiya order 'are mostly Shia Muslims'. The Chishtiya fraternity is as much Sunni as any other, though perhaps love of the family of the Prophet is given more prominence in their circles. Lastly, the glossary is not free of inaccuracies: *Dahr*, for example, means 'time' and not 'materialism'. In pre-Islamic times dahr was personified and considered the source of creation, therefore *dahri* has come to mean atheist. *Ghazal* is not necessarily a lyric in relation to the love of God but often gives expression to profane sentiments. *Mustafa* does not primarily mean the Prophet but the 'Chosen One', a designation which is applied to the Prophet only secondarily.

This is not to suggest that the book lacks erudition and painstaking study. The author writes lucidly, and even abstruse subjects are treated with discernment and justice. The bibliography is carefully prepared and the index will be found very useful.

Dr Azad Faruqi is a promising scholar and his main interest seems to be the study of religion within a comparative framework. His book, *Sufism and Bhakti*, is divided into six chapters, and there is also a concluding section which offers the author's views. Faruqi has concentrated on two main figures of the mystic tradition, Sri Ramakrishna and Maulana Rumi. He has picked up especially the crucial concepts of the mystic experience, *'ishq* and *bhakti*, and tried to understand their significance in the work of these two important thinkers. It may be observed at the outset that the world of Maulana Rumi is vast and can be understood in many different ways. Muhammad Iqbal, for example, was very selective in his appreciation of Rumi, and we may not agree with him on many points. Iqbal's Rumi is coloured deeply by his own views and we may wonder how far Rumi would recognize himself in the image that Iqbal projected of him. If this is true of Iqbal, it may be much more true of the image that we get of Rumi via a comparison with Sri Ramakrishna. The comparison can be instructive, if only its limitations are not neglected. First of all, we have to understand what bhakti means in Hindu tradition and what 'ishq means in Sufi tradition. In the perspective of the Maulana 'ishq is contrasted with reason. It is said that reason, however subtle, cannot find access

to Ultimate Reality. The embodiment of reason is Iblis, who argued out his case before God and said that it was really God who misled him, whereas Adam is the embodiment of love. He did not argue but bowed before God in total surrender, saying along with his consort: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not and have not mercy, indeed we are of the lost' (Q. 7:23). In Sri Ramakrishna, love has the peculiar accent which also means surrender and total abandon, and yet this is not brought in contrast to reason. Another distinguishing feature of the Sufi conception of love or 'ishq is its curious ambiguity, which cannot be got rid of. This makes it so attractive even to those who are not sensitive to the Sufi vision.

Another important consideration will be to see whether the terms are used in the same sense and in the same context. In the Christian frame of reference, distinction is clearly drawn between Agape and Eros. Agape has a strong ethical accent, but Eros is ethically indifferent and denotes the urge to transcend human finitude. But the Sufi and the Bhakti traditions have this transcendental urge as their main constituent. Further, in the Sufi tradition love has as its model the relationship of the lover and the beloved in their intimacy and, above all, the love of man and woman: Laila and Majnun, Shirin and Farhad, are brought in to illustrate the love of God for man and the love of man for God. Unlike Spinoza's intellectual love of God, we find here that God is involved in this mutual relationship, though, of course, no anthropomorphism is intended. Human love is taken as the starting point for divine love. In the Hindu tradition the relationship is understood in a much more varied form as the love of man for child, of bride for bridegroom, and is considered in different manifestations. As Faruqi says, 'thus, though love is only one, it is expressed in different modes.' To quote him further: 'However, the closest relationship with God and a complete union with Him is achieved in *madhura rasa*. Here the devotee has a love for God which is of the type of what a wife cherishes for her husband, a woman lover for her paramour.' (p. 141)

To really understand Hindu spirituality it is necessary to recognize the significance of symbols in religion in general, and of Hinduism in particular. The Maulana's world was much more variegated, even if we leave aside the fascinating world of his poetry. But there are striking features common to both. The way Sri Ramakrishna fainted when seeing cranes flying in the sky

reminds one of Rumi's rapture at the slightest stimulation, even at the hammering of a goldsmith. This suggests that both were susceptible to forces which, to a secular eye, might have no significance. Faruqi writes very lucidly and knows what he says. His quotations of the *Mathnawi* are very apt and he does not digress.

Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, the author of *Ahmad Sirhindi's Approach to Sufism*, is a seasoned scholar. He is as much at home in academic philosophy, both Western and Islamic, as in a religious tradition, particularly Islam and Christianity. He is not only a champion of sobriety in Sufism but also writes in a way which reflects his overall attitude. His writings are marked by a sober analysis of issues and, whether we agree with him on all points or not, we are impressed by his sincerity and cool, analytic approach. His specific concern is to show what kind of Sufism has a place in Islam. He knows that in relation to Sufism there have been two conflicting attitudes: the one is marked by suspicion, the other by unreserved approval. The first is upheld mainly by those who are called '*ulama*'-*i zahir*, the jurists and the *faqihs*, the other is expressed by those who believe that the essence of Islam lies in Sufic perception. Consequently, much tension has prevailed between the two. The ulama see in the practices of the Sufis, by and large, an innovation, a deviation from the *sunna* which is incompatible with the Quran and Tradition. They do not approve of the general practice of the Sufis in taking recourse to *mutashabihat* (not clearly intelligible passages in the Quran), and even to offer allegorical interpretations of *muhkamat* (unambiguous passages in the Quran). The Sufis, on their part, think that the Quranic verses have a deeper meaning than what the *fuqaha*' (jurists) understand. Needless to say, Sufism itself is a complex phenomenon and all Sufis don't fit the same label. Hence, Sufis are considered either sober or intoxicated. Among the sober, the most prominent name is that of Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910); among the intoxicated that of Bayazid al-Bistami (d. 874). Our writer has given a very illuminating survey of the whole phenomenon. To show what Islamic Sufism means he thought it fit to have Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) in the forefront of his discussion.

Sirhindi's views and attitude can only be truly appreciated in their historical context. He lived at a time when Akbar's religious

policies had stripped Islam of its privileged position and reduced it to one faith in competition with others. As a consequence, compliance with the norms of the Sharia had slackened, and Islam was confronted with new challenges. No wonder if, at such a time, Sirhindi considered it obligatory on his part to fight for the Sharia and, consistent with his mission, did not hesitate to accept theological positions which appear rather odd to a layman. For example, while conceding that the companions of the Prophet were not all of equal rank he thought that even the lowest among them was superior to any *wali* (saint). Ansari approvingly quotes his view: 'Even Wahshi, the killer of Hamzah, who joined the fold of the companions later, is better than Uwais Qarni, the great *tabi'i* (belonging to the generation after the companions) famous for his devotion.' (p. 88) Now it passes one's understanding how Uways, who could not meet the Prophet's express instruction to remain where he was, and whose blessing was sought by Caliph 'Umar (second only in rank in the Sunni hierarchy), should suffer in rank on this account. Does it mean that physical proximity is all that counts and spiritual affinity has no place whatsoever? Such a predominantly theological concern and bias on the part of the author may be discerned on more important issues. It is well known that Sufis of almost all ranks, sober or intoxicated, including al-Jilani, held that a true Sufi is concerned more with the love of God than with the Hereafter, the delights of Paradise or the fear of hell. It is God's pleasure (*ridwan*) which he seeks. But here this attitude does not find favour, and a reference is made to the example of the companions in whom concern for the Hereafter was predominant. Again we hear that the emotional exuberance which the Sufi displays, and his ecstatic behaviour, do not find any resonance in the time of the Prophet. We submit that a religion which is truly great does not unfold all its possibilities at any one point in history but is liable to reveal dimensions unknown in the first stage of its manifestation. Sirhindi tries to be as faithful to the theological concerns as possible and yet feels free to deviate from theologians when necessary.

Sirhindi developed his ideas on two fronts, the practical and the speculative. On the practical front his attitude is theologically motivated, though this is understandable in the context of the religious crisis of his time. He tried his best to infuse Islamic religiosity not through the exposition of any systematic work but by writing letters to notables whose voice counted at the time.

Now, it is clear that any Sufism called 'Islamic' must seek its warrant from the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet. In principle there cannot be any disagreement with this, but, the moment we attempt the implementation of this basically sound proposal, difficulties arise. All the schools of *kalam* and all sectarian developments have found support in Quranic verses and interpreted them in their own way. It is basically a question of hermeneutics, which allows alternative explanations. If it comes to the decision of theologians, we cannot attribute to them any ability to appreciate questions of philosophical implication, even if there is a consensus. It is to the credit of Ibn Taymiya that he was daring enough to call into question theological decisions, past and present, even though they were based on the highest references. The Quran, as the Sufis generally held, can be understood at different levels, and some of the great Sufis have developed their own commentaries. As regards the sunna, it depends on historical transmissions, and doubts can always arise about anthenticity. Even Sirhindi has not always agreed with theologians and was bold enough to differ from al-Ash'ari, who has come to be recognized as the official spokesman of sunni orthodoxy. I am thinking of Sirhindi's views on the nature of human freedom, in which question he holds—as against, probably, the generality of theologians—'that the will of man is effective.' (p. 308) To think that the Sufic inspiration and *kashf* does not give any knowledge outside the framework of the Sharia is not held by him consistently. He confessed that though the knowledge of the *Muqatta'at* was known to God alone, he was later favoured to know their inner meaning (p. 228). While he sometimes maintains that the prophetic experience is a category by itself, he himself puts forward a claim to a kind of sainthood (*wilaya*) which is close to that of the Prophet. (p. 98) However his basic assertion that the prophetic experience is a category by itself is sound. 'The Prophet is not a *wali* in the mystic sense. Nor is his prophecy a form of wilayat'. (p. 85) I agree with Ansari that it is unfortunate that Sirhindi did not pursue this idea adequately. If this is conceded the whole question of the relative excellence of *wilaya* (sainthood) and *nubuwa* (prophethood), even in the case of the Prophet himself, will lose its relevance.

It is quite in consonance with the general view of Sirhindi, with its sharp demarcation between the way of the Prophet and that of the wali, that he is led to believe that a wali, who is totally absorbed

in God, is not superior to the one who 'returns' to the world. A *salik*, in other words, has a spiritual priority over the *majzub*, truly speaking. It was probably under the influence of Sirhindi that Muhammad Iqbal distinguished emphatically the prophetic way from the mystic way, the one of withdrawal and the other of insertion into history. But I feel that the quality of absorption or 'return' may vary from Sufi to Sufi and, with some, these states may alternate. We must also not forget that some of the great names in the history of Sufism have experienced 'conversion' through absorbed and intoxicated souls. God alone knows what place His chosen ones occupy with Him. Though the knowledge gained through *kashf* and vision is liable to err and, hence, their use in theological decision is deprecated, we find that both Shah Waliullah and Sirhindi make ample use of their vision, Shah Waliullah even more so than Sirhindi. Shah Waliullah, for example, was led to his view about the relative pre-eminence of the rightly guided companions on the basis of the vision in which the Prophet himself conveyed to him his preference. On the other hand Sirhindi was convinced of the wilaya of Ibn 'Arabi through a vision which indeed surprised him at the beginning, especially as he found Ibn 'Arabi's views not in conformity with the Sharia.

It was indeed a happy idea that made Ansari introduce Ibn Taimiyya, the supposed critic of Sufism, in order to show us that his criticism was directed only against certain Sufi practices and doctrines rather than against Sufism as such. It will go a long way to clear misunderstandings about Ibn Taimiyya, an intrepid soul no doubt. It was, above all, al-Jilani whose approach he commended. Though a champion of sobriety, he did not condemn even Bayazid and Shibli, intoxicated souls *par excellence*, and excused them for their *sukr* (intoxication). But Sirhindi's sympathies were wider. He appears as a true Sufi who did not find a harsh word even for al-Hallaj, whereas Ibn Taimiyya used intemperate language to condemn the ones he thought were deviating from Sharia. This was the case with Ibn 'Arabi and his doctrine of wahdat al-wujud and, above all, with al-Hallaj, his *bête noire*. He was taken to be a *hululi*, a believer in incarnation, though recent research does not bear this out.

It will not be out of place to make some comments on Sirhindi's view of the world and its relation to God, as this has figured as one of the dividing lines between Sirhindi and Ibn 'Arabi. Sirhindi

writes: 'It has been revealed to us in an authentic *kashf* and in a clear vision that by His perfect power God has created the world in the domain of illusion (*wahm*) and by His consummate skill conferred existence on sheer appearence (*numud-i mahad*)'. (p. 288) It has no more than 'shadow objectivity'. This view comes rather close to some form of western idealism, where God is introduced to explain the world's stability, though the western idealist carefully avoids calling it an illusion. Sirhindi's ideas in this respect do not seem to me to be different from Ibn 'Arabi's, as Shah Waliullah held, notwithstanding Ansari's arguments to the contrary. Whether the differences are more than verbal can be decided by experts like him.

I may be allowed to give expression by my reaction to the views of Sirhindi and Ibn 'Arabi which cannot but be tinged with a personal bias. I consider the world-view of Ibn 'Arabi far more varied and rich in insight than that of Sirhindi and, though I feel greater affinity to Ibn 'Arabi both as a person and as a seer, yet, surprisingly enough, I find myself in agreement with Sirhindi on the question of wahdat al-wujud, especially in his later formulations. It is not proper, I think, to apply the category wujud to God. God is, as Sirhindi said, beyond being and non-being, and he confessed frankly: 'In some of my letters I have of course written that the reality of God is pure Being. But this is because I was not aware of the truth at that time.' (p. 288) If this is so, God as *deus absconditus* in His noumenal reality cannot be qualified. He is He (*hu*), the supremely transcendent *wa 'llahu a'lam*. The main purpose of Sirhindi was to keep Sufism within the bounds of theological reason. Did he succeed? He was in the end led to make pronouncements which shocked his friend 'Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi (d. 1642) who was forced to make an open rebuttal. Sirhindi claimed: 'I am a direct disciple of God and my hand is a substitute for the hand of God.' He acknowledged himself a follower and attendant of the Prophet through many links, 'but' [as] a direct disciple of God with no links in between'. (pp. 97–8) Although, of course, such expressions are frequent among intoxicated Sufis, they appear very strange from a person who considered the state of intoxication a lower stage of spiritual development. However, I believe that what Sirhindi meant has nothing blasphemous about it. Even an ordinary Muslim stands before God face to face and calls directly upon Him in anguish and distress. It is Islam which believes in man's

direct confrontation with God. However, the requirements of a Sufi's spiritual progress are unique. The Sufi's affiliation with his Shaikh is meant to preserve him from falling prey to every whim and caprice, and to desist from taking what Ibn Jawzi called 'the Devil's delusion' (*talbis iblis*) as divinely inspired. The insistence of all schools on compliance with the Sharia is to prevent a person from freeing himself from all moral restraints and developing antinomian tendencies. The conscious maintenance of rapport with the Quran is really his involvement in the prophetic experience. He is made to walk by the prophetic light, yet in his spiritual itinerary there may come a stage when God's chosen one outside the circle of the prophets may be privileged to have a time with God, as the prophet said of himself, 'without any prophet or angel coming in between'. Sirhindi's case bears eloquent testimony to the fact that ecstatic pronouncements, the so-called *shatahat*, need not be dismissed as of no import but, at least in some cases, may reveal truth which can neither be judged logically nor condemned theologically. They are challenges to be reflected upon and contemplated in silent meditation.

We are grateful to 'Abdul Haq Ansari for his remarkable study of a fascinating figure of Sufism. He has done well to have given, in translation, selected passages of his letters and to have summarized their content. Exhaustive notes, a carefully prepared index and a glossary of technical terms add greatly to the value of the book.

Among Islamic thinkers of the recent past Shah Waliullah occupies a prominent place. All attempts at the reconstruction of Islamic thought have sought inspiration from him. This is as much true of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as of Mohammad Iqbal, the most original and dynamic figure of modern Islam. But unfortunately, as Baljon in his work *Religion And Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi 1703–1762* observes, not much attention is given by Western scholars to the movements of Islamic religious thought in the Indian subcontinent. He writes:

> On the whole, the Subcontinent, like other peripheral areas of Muslim believers is treated in a stepfatherly fashion by European and American Islamologists. In evidence thereof, University libraries in the West appear to be slow in acquiring editions of Shah Wali Allah's works. Another handicap is that the latter's mental products are not only

numerous but also notorious for a terse style and ample use of technical terms mostly inadequately explained. (p. vii)

What is remarkable in Shah Waliullah is that he does not hesitate to seek inspiration from sources as controversial and as opposed as that of Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn Taimiyya. He is as much a fearless theologian as a visionary of the purest waters. Although a Hanafi in legal affiliation, he does not feel shy to accept the judgements of the Shafi'ite school when he finds them more in consonance with the sunna of the Prophet. In other words, he tries to maintain a balance between extremes and reconcile them whenever possible. The Shah is a prolific writer and coins his own terminology, which one finds hard to convey through a different medium. It is to Baljon's credit that he does his best to encompass the varied aspects of Shah Waliullah's thought, treating it with great sensitivity and in a small compass. His book explains lucidly and succinctly, in fifteen chapters, his vocational visions, extra-scriptural medium of Divine Revelation, and metaphysics, psychology, mysticism, ethics. Independent chapters are allotted to his ideas concerning the prophets and the afterlife, to his classification of people of eminence, to his views on the Quran and the Sharia. Nor are socio-economic ideas left out of the account. Lastly, we have an epilogue which brings before us Shah Waliullah in a historical perspective, and which summarizes the salient features of his personality and thought. In the end, a very useful and valuable glossary of technical terms is given which every reader and earnest student of Shah Waliullah's thought will find indispensable.

We will try to offer some comments and stray ideas on the Shah's contribution to Islamic thought and to the Sufi approach to Islam. One great difficulty which confronts the reader is his constant recourse to visions as the basis of some important conclusions, be they in relation to some crucial metaphysical issues or in relation to the relative excellence of the immediate successors of the Prophet. One cannot help feeling a bias towards his own Sunni affiliation in such judgements. No doubt, the visions may have an objective reference at least in some cases, but, as the Sunni theologians themselves admit, they cannot serve as valid support for theological or mystical convictions. What we admire in Shah Waliullah is his 'sense of balance', which, as Baljon remarks, 'is harmoniously coupled with remarkable independence of thought, on account of which he produces many ideas of refreshing originality.' (p. 203) Although

opposed to Mu'tazalism and Shi'ite ideas, he nevertheless utilizes them if he finds them necessary. His aim was the reconciliation of opposites. No wonder Baljon finds him as much an admirer of Ibn 'Arabi as of Ibn Taimiyya. Shah Waliullah agreed with Jami that 'Ibn 'Arabi filled a position higher than sainthood but below Prophethood.' (p. 201)

When we deal with his metaphysical position we must remember that it is not metaphysics in the Aristotelian sense but a theosophy interspersed with brilliant insights as well as with obscure categories that are unintelligible except to the initiate. In this respect he has much in common with Ibn 'Arabi, though Ibn 'Arabi's world is much more accommodating than Shah Waliullah's. This is the reason why we do not find in Shah Waliullah such seemingly shocking views as we meet in Ibn 'Arabi. Nevertheless, it is to the credit of Shah Waliullah that he remains calm in face of absurd beliefs in the salvation of the Pharaoh and the place that Ibn 'Arabi assigns to Iblis. Rather, he attributes the contradictory statements of Ibn 'Arabi to linguistic necessities.

Shah Waliullah's independence of judgement is seen best in his stand in the controversy between the proponents of wahdat al-wujud and wahdat al-shuhud. He blames both the followers of Ibn 'Arabi, as well as of Ahmad Sirhindi for the misconceptions which were responsible for the heat they generated. Baljon rightly observes that while in the West the differences have been played down, Muslim scholars find them irreconcilable. He states: 'Curiously enough Sirhindi himself declares that the controversy between the '*ulama* and the advocates of *wahdat al-wujud* is reducible to a different choice of words (*lafz*).' (p. 61, fn. 86)

It is, however, true that for advocates of wahdat al-shuhud the unity of being marks a phase in the spiritual development of the salik; it has no ontological validity. Yet the universe which is of contingent beings is reduced to shadow (*zill*). It is remarkable that even the Shah is prompted to make what Baljon calls the daring statement: 'with God the universe has a cohesion (*ittisal*) of a rather esoteric (*wijdani*) nature so that in a state of rapture one may judge that the universe be identical with God.' (p. 54) But most interesting is his approximation to Ibn 'Arabi in the view that God on the day of resurrection will appear differently to different people according to their beliefs. God will remain the same, of course, but 'men will see Him in different shapes.' (p. 100; fn. 13)

It was again, I think, Ibn 'Arabi who first mooted the idea that when God appears on the day of resurrection in different forms from their beliefs, He will transform Himself in a form with which they are familiar. Ibn 'Arabi says in this regard:

You must know for sure, if you are a real believer, that God will appear on the dayof Resurrection (in various forms successively): first in a certain form in which He will be recognized, next in a different form in which He will be denied, then He will transform Himself into another form in which He will be again recognized. Throughout this whole process, He will remain He; in whatever form He appears it is He and no one else. Yet, on the other hand, it is also certain that this particular form is not the same as that particular form.[1]

But what is most important, and of great relevance to our time in Shah Waliullah's writings, is the way in which, according to him, the Sharia of any religion comes into being. The Imam or the Prophet who introduces his new religion must needs take into account the customs and the standard of the civilization of his people and should allow them greater importance than any other people. In his words: 'God...wanted to reform the Arabs through the agency of the Prophet and the remaining parts of the earth through the agency of the Arabs. Accordingly, it was necessary that the rules of the Sharia were adapted to the customs and habits of the Arabs' (p. 172)

It is indeed this aspect of his thought which appealed to Mohammed Iqbal most. Here Iqbal finds inspiration for the reconstruction and readjustment of legal and social thought. However, no one else has dared to develop any concrete steps in accordance with the spirit of the Shah's thought. In the interpretation of some customary views, again, Shah Waliullah takes a very rational and commonsense view. It is commonly believed that the moon was really split. The relevant Quranic verses are interpreted to indicate a miracle. However, according to Shah Waliullah, there is no necessity to assume any factual acceptance. He writes:

This phenomenon was occasioned by a cohesion of small particles of water into, so to speak, one plane. Behind it there was a mountain or

[1] Quoted in Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), p. 83.

a dense cloud. Together these produced the effect of a mirror. When the moon was reflected in it, people observed two moons in the sky. Since a part of the reflected and a part of the real moon were concealed, two halves were seen in the sky. (p. 105)

Furthermore, it is rather amusing to find Shah Waliullah adopting what Baljon calls the commonsense interpretation of some prophetic traditions.

What is most interesting is that, in spite of maintaining a strict theological position, he has offered a number of ideas which can go a long way to bridge the gulf which divides Christianity and Islam. For example, he writes that he assigns equal importance to the intercession of Muhammad and Jesus, as: 'Both of them are jets d'eau of the same turbulent river and both of them are musical sounds of the same sonorous flute.' (p. 115) Again, in his historical perception the Shah finds in Moses and not in Abraham the closest proximity to our Prophet. It is obviously his legislative endeavour to develop the Sharia that may have prompted the Delhi divine to reconsider the respective roles of Abraham and Moses in Islamic prophetology.

What is most remarkable and goes to the credit of Baljon is that he does not follow the beaten track. He has found in Shah Waliullah the concept of God's continuous involvement in history and His concern for mankind, although this often is considered alien to the teaching of the Quran. This idea of progressive revelation, I think, has some similarity with the German philosopher Friedrich Schelling's (1775–1854) philosophy of history.

Shah Waliullah even tries to understand the concept of Divine Trinity in his own way and ventures to make it meaningful within the framework of his mystical perspective. His social and economic ideas, his emphasis on co-operation, and his understanding of what is called *irtifaqat* and the need to overcome social and economic difficulties, show him not as a mystic withdrawn from the world but as a thinker deeply concerned with the problems and difficulties which man faces in actual everyday living. As Baljon points out, he is a man of moderation and conciliation, ever ready to accommodate Shia ideas without hesitation, as in the requirements considered necessary for the election of the Caliph. It must be admitted, however, that in spite of all his refreshing originality, Shah Waliullah does not show that breadth of compassion so characteristic of great Sufis like Ibn 'Arabi and Maulana Rumi, and which is apparent in

the so-called esoteric writings of al-Ghazali. This is sadly discernible in the treatment which is accorded to the infidels who, in fact, are brought to sub-human levels. When a philosopher like Aristotle could find justification for slavery, we cannot find fault with a Muslim divine if he cannot rise above his theologically-conditioned priorities. Nonetheless, we are as much convinced as Baljon of his 'many ideas of refreshing originality' (p. 203) and his 'impressive achievements' in quest of truth. (cf. p. 204) Baljon's work is a solid and scholarly contribution to the understanding of a remarkable Indian theologian and mystic.

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